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NATHAN HALE OF '73

A Drama in Four Acts

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OF '73

A Drama in Four Acts

This edition is limited to Five Hundred copies of which this is No. 486

NATHAN HALE OF '73

A Drama in Four Acts

BY

C. C. S. CUSHING

"I only regret that I have but one life to give for my country."

YALE PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION
NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT
MCMVIII

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NOTES

In collecting material for this play the following works have been consulted: Johnston's "Life of Nathan Hale," Stuart's "Life of Nathan Hale," Partridge's "Life of Nathan Hale," Prof. F. B. Dexter's "Social Life at Yale in the Early Days of Connecticut Hall in 1770," G. D. Seymour's "A Plea for Nathan Hale," Farmer's "Brinton Eliot from Yale to Yorktown," John Fiske's "American Revolution," "Diary of President Stiles," "Diary, Speech and Letters of Nathan Hale," Clarence Deming's "Old Rules of Yale College," Prof. J. C. Schwab's "Revolutionary History of Fort Number Eight," Bartlett's "College Words and Customs."

The speech to the graduating members of Linonia, in Act I, was written and delivered by Nathan Hale in 1772, as transcribed in the records of that society now in the Yale Library.

The scene between Hale and his brother officers, in Act II, is founded on Hull's "Memoirs."

In the conflicting accounts of Hale's movements after entering the British lines, Johnston's conclusions are utilised, that the American spy was captured in New York and hanged at Artillery Park.

The relations between Hale and Alice Adams are treated fictitiously.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

As presented by
The Westminster Dramatic Club at Westminster School,
Simsbury, Connecticut, March 27, 1908.

Arranged in the order of their initial entrance.

GRIDLEY, Yale, '73, a Senior and Hale's Roommate - - - H. J. BEACH

HEZEKIAH BROWN, a Freshman G. B. LINDERMAN, JR.

JEREMIAH, President Daggett's Blackamoor - - - - - - - - G. PIERCE

THOMAS ADAMS, a Sophimore,* Protégé of Hale's, and brother of Alice Adams - T. G. HOLT

NATHAN HALE, '73, Chancellor of the Linonia Society - - - W. L. BRADLEY

JOHN RIPLEY, '73, a Member of "Brothers in Unity," the Rival Society - - - - - - - J. S. FASSETT, JR.

MEMBERS OF THE LINONIA SOCIETY:

THOMAS MEADE, '73 - - - K. D. HULL
ROGER ALDEN, '73 - - - - N. NOYES
WILLIAM HULL, '72 - - - - P. DODGE
ELISHA BILLINGS, '72 - - - R. S. MILLER
BELLAMY, '72 - - - - - - - J. W. WALKER
BRINSMADE, '72 - - - - - - H. E. TUTTLE
BECKWITH, '73 - - - - - - P. BARNUM
CAMP, '73 - - - - - - - - G. H. HART
ROYAL FLINT, '73 - - - - - C. W. SCHWARTZ
BALDWIN, '74 - - - - - - - R. OSBORN
NOYES, '75 - - - - - - - - G. L. SMITH
STRONG, '74 - - - - - - - F. F. W. WILLIAMS
WOODBRIDGE, '74 - - - - - E. S. WAYLAND
DANA, '75 - - - - - - - - S. P. DODGE

* "Sophimore," according to the spelling in vogue in 1772.

NATHAN HALE *Cast of Characters*

ICHABOD, a Boy - - - - - - - - E. P. RICKER, JR.

MRS. SINGLETON - - - - - - - - M. WHITEHOUSE

MISTRESS BETTY SINGLETON - - H. J. WHEELWRIGHT

MISTRESS ALICE ADAMS - - - - J. C. HOLT, JR.

MISTRESS PANDORA PENDLETON P. HOAGLAND

BENJAMIN TALLMAGE, '73, a member of "Brothers in Unity" - - - - - - - - - - - N. NOYES

MR. HENRY ADAMS, Father of Tom and Alice - - - - - - - J. H. PHILBIN

SILENCE GREEN, a Maid Servant A. F. TUTTLE

DISCONTENTED MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN ARMY:

SILAS SMITH - - - - - - - - N. NOYES

AARON THOMPSON - - - - - K. D. HULL

JOSEPH SHARP - . - - - - - R. S. MILLER

FITZ VAN NORDEN - - - - - W. M. GAYLORD

MISTRESS PRUTTER, Colonel Knowlton's Housewife - - - - E. L. BARTLETT

HEMPSTEAD, Sergeant under Captain Hale in Knowlton's Rangers - - - - - - - - - - - - - J. H. PHILBIN

TOBY, a little Nigger - - - - - - R. L. C. KEYSER

COLONEL KNOWLTON, Commander of Knowlton's Rangers - - - - - - - - - - - - - J. CHANDLER

BOYS BELONGING TO FOWLER'S RANGERS:

BILDAD FOWLER - - - - - - D. L. MONTAGUE

TIMOTHY BROWN - - - - - - L. JACOB

SOLOMON JONES - - - - - - L. F. ROSSITER

JULIUS STEELE - - - - - - - L. F. SEWALL

ASHER DOOLITTLE - - - - - J. W. RICKER

EARNEST PRENTICE - - - - - C. ELLIOTT, JR.

LIEUTENANT FITZHUGH, of the Royal Highlanders - - - - - G. PIERCE

LORD PERCY, Adjutant-General of the British force under Lord Howe	A. E. O. MUNN
MRS. PENDLETON, a worldly Mother	C. L. STROBEL, JR.
LIEUTENANT STEINBRÜCKE	R. S. MILLER
ORDERLY	R. OSBORN
CAPTAIN CUNNINGHAM	J. P. GOODSPEED

SCENES

ACT I

The Chambers of Hale and Gridley in Connecticut Hall, Yale College, in the fall of 1772.

ACT II

(Four years later, early in September.)

Colonel Knowlton's Garden, near Turtle Bay, New York.

ACT III

(Two weeks later.)

New York. A Hall in the Hurst House (occupied by Lord Percy), on the evening of September 21, 1776.

ACT IV

(Fifteen minutes later.)

A small Bed-chamber in the Dove Tavern, New York.

THE TEXT OF THE PLAY

ACT I

The chambers of Hale and Gridley in Connecticut Hall, Yale College, in the fall of 1772. It is 6.30 p.m.

The room is about 30 feet long and 10 feet high. At L. R. is a fireplace with crane and banked fire. From the fireplace runs a wall at right angles into the room, against which is a fire seat. There is a small closet over the fire seat, containing pewter plates and porringers. The wall, again at right angles, proceeds up stage with a door at U. R. opening into Gridley's room. At the back are two old-fashioned windows looking out on the yard. Between these windows is a high writing desk. On the left of stage is a straight wall containing two doors. The U. L. door opens on the stairs, the L. L. door leads into Hale's bedroom.

There are old-fashioned chairs about and a thousand-legged table at C. littered with old text-books, such as Wallebius's Amesii Medulla, Watts's Logic and Vincent's Catechism. There is a clock on the mantelpiece. The only light in the room comes from the fireplace.

As the curtain rises, an old drinking song, "Here's a Health unto His Majesty," is heard through the open window, from the yard below. There is a general atmosphere of youth and freedom from care.

The entry door at U. L. is thrown abruptly open, and a young man hurriedly enters. He is fairly tall and is dressed in knee breeches, red waistcoat and shirt sleeves, and even in the half light his wig is seen to be awry.

As he enters he throws his three-cornered hat on the table and going over to the mantelpiece picks up a flint box, and after striking it two or three times at length succeeds in lighting the various candles in the room. As he does so he unconsciously whistles the song the men in the entry below are singing. He then pokes the fire.

GRIDLEY (*catching sight of the clock*). Gad! but I'm late. (*He throws off his waistcoat and loosens his stock, and as he does so he crosses to the window and pokes his head out.*) Hi, there, you fellows! (*The song ceases.*)

VOICE. Is that you, Gridley?

GRIDLEY. Yes.

VOICE. What's the rub?

GRIDLEY. If you see a Freshman send him up, will you? I'm in the deuce of a hurry.

VOICE. All right!

(*Gridley crosses back into the room, kicking off his shoes as he does so, and disappears into his bedroom at U. R. He reappears in a moment.*)

GRIDLEY. Drat that bedmaker! What's the old hag done with my small-clothes? (*After looking in a clothes box at L. he slams the lid down and hastily goes into Hale's room at L. L. and searches among Hale's things. Then he goes to the entry door at L. L.*) Beckwith! Oh, Beckwith! (*No answer. He goes into the entry.*) Beckwith!

A MUFFLED VOICE. Yes! What's itching you?

GRIDLEY. I'm going down to the Cock and Crown, and my plum-coloured breeches have disappeared. If the Moor's in the buttery I wish you'd ask him if he's taken them and send him up.

MUFFLED VOICE. All right!

(*Gridley slams the door to and goes to the desk at the back, tripping over his shoes as he does so and dropping his stick and neckcloth in the chair. He takes a candle and places it in front of the mantelpiece at L. R. and anxiously examines his chin. He makes an exclamation of*

disgust as he realises that he needs a shave. A timid knock is heard on the door.)

GRIDLEY (*undoing his shirt*). Come in!

(*Enter a young bare-headed fellow who looks awkward and afraid.*)

FRESHMAN. They said you wanted me.

GRIDLEY. Sir! Don't forget to say "Sir" when talking to an upper classman.

FRESHMAN (*hastily*). I beg your humble pardon, sir. I meant to say "Sir," really sir, indeed, I did, sir!

GRIDLEY (*returning from his room*). Take my jug and run down to the pump and get me some water, and be quick about it, for I'm in a damnable hurry.

FRESHMAN. Yes, sir!

GRIDLEY. And if you see that lazy put of a blackamoor in the entry, tell him to hurry.

FRESHMAN. Yes, sir.

GRIDLEY. Scoot!

FRESHMAN. Yes, sir. (*As he turns to leave the stage he all but hits the large person of the blackamoor.*)

BLACKAMOOR (*as he enters*). Great bullets and guns! Young fellow, what you tryin' to do? Ah have no intention of being dashed down those steps into Kingdom Come yet awhile. My goodness! 'Tain't safe to live in this heah college any mo'. Ah got a potato in the nose, dinner-time, from one of them reckless Sophimores.

GRIDLEY. Where are my small-clothes and surtout?

MOOR. 'Fore de Lord, Marse Gridley, ah doan know. That fat ole bedmaker! Ask her.

GRIDLEY. Bedmaker yourself! I gave them to you yesterday. I mean my plum-coloured breeches.

MOOR. Oh, yes. (*He grins knowingly.*)

GRIDLEY. Get them directly. I can't wait. Look at the clock!

MOOR. Lovely clock, sah! A lovely clock!

GRIDLEY. I mean I'm late. I should have been down at the Cock and Crown on Elm Street—fifteen minutes ago.

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young man enters, most foppishly dressed in a claret-coloured suit with white silk stockings, a yellow waistcoat, and a white corduroy surtout edged with fur. His wig is most beautifully dressed and he carries a cane and a snuff-box.)

ADAMS. Oh, I beg your pardon, but is Mr. Hale in? Mr. Nathan Hale?

GRIDLEY. No, he isn't. He's taking supper at the Cock and Crown, where I'd be now if I hadn't forgotten the time! Would you like to leave a message?

ADAMS (*after a brief pause*). My name is Adams, and I'm in the Sophimore class.

GRIDLEY. Of course, I know. I've heard Nathan speak of you.

ADAMS. Do you know when he'll be back?

GRIDLEY. In half an hour. He's going to have a meeting here of the Linonia Society, and so will have to leave supper early. That reminds me. You're the one that the Linonia and the Brothers' Society are so keen after. You see, I can talk about them, as, unfortunately, I'm not in either myself and am a Senior.

ADAMS (*bitterly*). I'm having a high time. The trouble is, I was ill last year when the elections were given out, and so I have had to wait until this fall.

GRIDLEY. From what I hear, they both want you. Does my stock look all right, and my neckcloth?

ADAMS. Perfect! But wait— (*He goes over to Gridley and gives the stock and ruffles a few deft touches.*) You look every inch a macaroni.

GRIDLEY. Do you know the Singletons?

ADAMS. Oh, yes! I was with them this afternoon. My sister Alice came down from Providence with them.

GRIDLEY. I'm rather worried about these stockings. I'd change them only I haven't time.

ADAMS. Perfect! No one could tell them from silk.

GRIDLEY (*laughing*). You did. Would you tell me where you got that surtout?

ADAMS. Certainly. At Pell's, near Bowling Green,

New York, on the right hand side of Pearl Street. Are you acquainted with New York?

GRIDLEY. No, I have never been as far south as that.

ADAMS. In case you go there some day, the New York coach—that's the red and green one—stops at Fraunces' Tavern on Broad Street. You walk down Pearl Street, from there to the Bowling Green, and there you are.

GRIDLEY. Unfortunately for me, I see no prospect of going. It is too long a trip. (*He pauses.*) Adams, it means a great deal to Nathan which Society you take.

ADAMS (*dropping his light tones*). That's just it. Of course, Linonia is the best, but ods-life! A man wants to go with the set in his own class that's congenial. Between ourselves, Ripley told me that I could have Brothers'.

GRIDLEY (*interrupting*). Ripley! So he's been talking to you? It's like him.

ADAMS. He only did it out of the purest friendship. He's always been most affable—which is more than Linonia has been. Between ourselves, Linonia is too cocky just because she is nineteen years old and Brothers' Society is only five.

GRIDLEY. You mean four.

ADAMS (*smiling*). Fudge! What difference does it make? They take themselves too seriously in Linonia. I heard they sit around and discuss death and have philosophical dissertations and eat funeral bakemeats.

GRIDLEY. Nonsense! That's Ripley's version. No crowd of healthy young men would do that.

ADAMS (*politely*). But you're not in Linonia. Why don't they contradict these statements, then?

GRIDLEY. Because Society men have agreed not to talk of such matters to under-classmen. I never heard of it being done till Ripley appeared.

ADAMS. You haven't any vast notion for Brothers', have you?

GRIDLEY. Of course I have, but not for Ripley. You

wouldn't find another person in Brothers' would talk so.

ADAMS. I hate to disappoint Nathan. He's been like a brother to me. No pun intended—— (*The talk is interrupted by a knock on the door.*)

GRIDLEY. Come in. (*Re-enter Freshman with bread and milk.*)

ADAMS. I think I'll run in a moment and see Ripley. I told him I would. Then when Nathan comes I'll hear him on the stairs. Good-bye. (*Exit.*)

FRESHMAN. Your bread and milk, sir.

GRIDLEY. Put it on the table. That will do for to-night. Thank you. (*Gridley accompanies the "Thank you" with a smile and the Freshman goes. Enter Moor with breeches and the Freshman almost runs into him.*)

MOOR. There you are again. That young fellah has designs on my health. Heah your breeches, sah, smokin' hot. Shall Ah lay 'em on your bed?

GRIDLEY. Yes, you old hen!

MOOR (*re-appearing from bedroom*). There! You know, Marse Gridley, I jus' hed the curiousest dream. There was Jacob on the end of a beanstalk, all in white——

GRIDLEY. I don't want anything else. (*Gridley goes into bedroom.*)

MOOR. One shilling, please.

GRIDLEY. What for? This is not a charitable institution.

MOOR. For that purple suit.

GRIDLEY. Highwayman! A shilling for resting your iron on my clothes! (*He unbuckles his breeches.*)

MOOR. Resting me iron! One shilling for makin' it exercise like fury, sah. One shilling six, please.

GRIDLEY (*from his bedroom*). Sixpence extra?

MOOR. Yes, sah, Ah forgot the sixpence, but Ah done a bit of mendin' on a buckle and it was sixpence Ah remember. Now, any time you feel like it, Marse Gridley. (*Exit.*)

GRIDLEY. You old thief!

(*The songs downstairs are heard again. The door opens and a large, well-built fellow comes in, dressed in a well-made blue suit. He is evidently in his best attire. His face is strong and very attractive. As he enters he goes over to the fireplace and after glancing at the wood-box walks abruptly to the door leading into the hall.*)

HALE. Jeremiah, bring up some more wood. (*He comes back into the room, takes off his hat and carefully puts it in his bedroom at the right. Then he re-enters the room, catches sight of Gridley's shoes on the floor, also his stock and neckcloth; he picks them up muttering to himself.*) He might at least pick his things up.

GRIDLEY (*buckling his breeches*). Oh, that's too bad, but I'm in a terrible rush.

HALE. You here? I don't think you are any great things. It's very nice when you're invited out to supper, not to come.

GRIDLEY. Isn't it a dreadful to-do? But everything was against me. I forgot in the first place all about it, and then when I remembered, it was half-past six and my clothes were visiting around the country, thanks to that blackamoor. Was Mrs. Singleton put out?

HALE. Put out? Wait till you see her. I'm going to dump your shoes and neck contrivances in here. (*He throws them into Gridley's room.*)

GRIDLEY. Are they still waiting?

HALE. No; I told them you had probably forgotten, that you very often did, and that they mustn't take affront, and that— Through with this, aren't you? (*He picks up the porringer.*)

GRIDLEY. No! I haven't touched it. I sent for that when I saw I was late.

HALE. Sit down here and eat it quickly, for I want this room to look like something for that meeting. (*He pushes him into a chair by the table.*) Do be careful and don't make a muss.

GRIDLEY. Do I look all right?

HALE. Perfectly charming! Irresistible!

GRIDLEY. You old fool! (*He begins to eat.*)

HALE. Betty was there.

GRIDLEY (*shortly*). Was she? How about Alice?

HALE. Alice? She was there, too.

GRIDLEY. Did you see her alone?

HALE (*contentedly*). She was like a distant star, only very much nicer. Do you know I am going to get a window-box and grow geraniums one of these days.

GRIDLEY. Don't be rash!

HALE. With lobelias. That's what they do in the English universities, so Mr. Cowper says. You know whom I mean? He's visiting Benedict Arnold on Crown Street.

GRIDLEY (*contemptuously*). Arnold!

HALE. Still as devoted as ever to dear Benedict, and only because he overcharged you for some wonderful distemper cure.

GRIDLEY. It almost killed me! What time will your meeting be over?

HALE. It won't take long. Hull has to go down to Kips Bay by chaise to-night. His father is ill. Oh, we'll be through by eight.

GRIDLEY. I tell you! I'll make amends by bringing Mrs. Singleton and the girls up here for some flip and apple tarts.

HALE. That ought to reinstate you. My poor father is very much worried about me. Two years ago it was measles he feared, now it's maidens. Some one told him about my going to a dance the other night with Mistress Alice Adams. I fail to see the evil in it. Why, in New York and Greenwich they think nothing of it, but in Connecticut it's a sin.

GRIDLEY. I'm afraid your father is old-fashioned. Have you any snuff? Mine's all used up.

HALE. In the upper left-hand drawer in my desk. (*Gridley goes over to it.*) No, the next one. You are among my quills. That's it.

GRIDLEY. Ah! (*He fills his snuff-box.*) That's one thing Benedict Arnold can do. He knows how to take snuff.

HALE. You're improving. (*Gridley takes some snuff between his fingers, snuffs it up, and then looks for his handkerchief.*) Oh, fudge! Where's your handkerchief? Oh, you've spoiled the entire effect. (*Gridley sneezes helplessly, dashes into his bedroom and instantly reappears with a handkerchief.*)

GRIDLEY. Now, watch me! (*This time he succeeds.*)

HALE. That's fair. (*He puts the porringer away.*)

GRIDLEY. Oh, before I go, I want to tell you that Tom Adams was here, and—well, Ripley has been talking to him.

HALE. Do you mean it? (*All his gayety leaves him.*)

GRIDLEY. Ripley doesn't hesitate to talk about you people behind your backs. He accuses you of being hypocrites, and pulling long faces.

HALE (*after a pause*). I am very grateful to you, Gridley, for telling me.

GRIDLEY. Why don't you show Adams your side of it?

HALE. I can't.

GRIDLEY. Well, good-bye, Nathan. (*He lays his hand affectionately on Hale's shoulder, and then goes. Hale is left alone. He goes over to the window in deepest gloom.*)

HALE. Oh, Tom! (*The door opens and Tom Adams comes in. Hale turns and makes an effort to control himself.*) Oh, come in, Tom.

ADAMS. Nathan, I don't know how to begin. (*Hale looks searchingly at him.*) I don't want to do anything you don't want me to do, but I have decided to go to Brothers'.

HALE (*calmly*). That's a subject I can't discuss with you, Tommy. I'm sorry.

ADAMS. I want to do the right thing. I want to know your side of it. Ripley told me to ask you after I said I couldn't believe certain things he said.

HALE. I am surprised Ripley should do that. There's nothing I can say, Tom, nothing.

ADAMS. I wouldn't have dared to speak to any upperclassman but you. Please don't think me impertinent, but you've always been closer than a brother to me, and I——

HALE (*affectionately*). I understand. (*Pause.*) There is a matter I want to talk to you about for a moment. I received this letter from your father yesterday. (*He goes into his room and brings out a letter.*) It is dated New York, October second. "My dear Mr. Hale: Would it be encroaching too much on your valuable time to ask you a few questions relative to my son? I hear rumours of a distressing nature concerning his life in college, and one direct statement to the effect that he was seen in an unfortunate condition upon College Street before Mix's Tavern. It is needless to state my disgust and sense of outrage, and I have fully decided, should such an act of moral degradation occur again, to cut him adrift; whereupon, when forced to buffet with the stern realities of life, he may learn through the bitterness of adversity what he would never learn in the smoother channels of prosperity. You have no idea with what grief and pain I have arrived at this decision. I have until this day builded for him alone and in anticipation of his entering my office have always kept a most promising billet open for him.

"The lad has had a moral and sober upbringing, and where should spring these seeds of the devil I can't conceive, unless, indeed, it be he favours my dear wife's uncle. If you would explain my views to him, I should indeed be your grateful and obedient servant. Henry Adams."

ADAMS. Dad seems to be in a vindictive mood. You see, when he was in college, things were different. He's not up to date. He means well——

HALE. You don't realise how seriously your father feels. It would be the worst kind of cruelty to him if you keep on as you have begun, and it is so easy for you

to stop now and do what he wants. (*He pauses.*) You'll have a better time if you do.

ADAMS (*doubtfully, after a pause*). I am different from you, Nathan. I don't amount to much and I like foolish things. Dad's unreasonable.

HALE. Supposing he *is* extreme, can't you make the sacrifice? (*Tom does not answer.*) Tommy, I don't want you to think I'm preaching, but I know the material you are made of, and I can't bear to see you play the fool. The fellows you are going with don't deserve to clean your boots. You think I don't enjoy life, that I am only a stiff old sobersides, but I do—every moment of it. It's you who don't appreciate it; you, who think that pleasure consists in numbing your brain and wasting your body—and Tom, think of your sister Alice and her disappointment if you go wrong. (*The door opens. Enter Jeremiah, the blackamoor.*)

JEREMIAH. Heah's that wood, Marse Hale. There, reckon that ought to give your fire somethin' to chew on. (*Exit.*)

ADAMS. Thank you, Nathan. (*Rising.*) I was going to meet some chaps at Mix's.

HALE. Who?

ADAMS. Livingston and Garrett, and——

HALE. And Ripley?

ADAMS. I think he is coming down later.

HALE. Tom, I wouldn't go to-night, at least, with them. (*Nathan puts his hand on Tom's shoulder affectionately.*)

ADAMS. Perhaps I'd better not. (*The door opens and a young man stands in the doorway dressed like a dandy, even to his powdered periwig. He is the incarnation of light-heartedness coupled with a devil-may-care manner.*)

RIPLEY (*laughing*). Pardon my intrusion on this touching family picture. You both look as though you were posed for "The Prodigal's Return." The fatted calf is the only thing lacking to complete the scene.

HALE (*easily*). Lacking! I should have said he was here with a vengeance.

RIPLEY. The reason for my intrusion is this: I wish to borrow your most honoured sand-box, for I have written a letter which is far from dry, both in wit and in ink, and I am in a hurry to dispatch it. It's to a friend of yours, Nathan, Mistress Alice Adams.

ADAMS. Why, she is stopping at the Cock and Crown, here in New Haven.

RIPLEY. The devil you say. (*To Nathan.*) I won't need your sand-box, after all, dear Nathan. Where, may I ask, did you obtain these rag rugs? Ods-life! but they're odd. I suppose they are the sort they use in—in the place you hail from. You'll forgive me, I hope, but the colours, Nathan, are a trifle crude.

HALE. Mistress Adams will be delighted with your criticism.

RIPLEY. Mistress Adams! Pray, what has she to do with it?

HALE. She selected the crude colours and braided them herself.

RIPLEY. And I can see where the story won't lose in the telling. But, Tom, I thought you were at Mix's Tavern.

ADAMS. I am not going to-night.

RIPLEY. Egad! I was more correct than I knew in referring to "The Prodigal's Return." I must say, I did not realise that I had interrupted Parson Hale in the midst of a hell-fire sermon on the sins of fellowship.

ADAMS. That's not the reason. I don't feel like it. I am not in the mood.

RIPLEY. Fudge! The fellows at Mix's won't take that view.

HALE. Small loss.

RIPLEY. They say, you're a tallow candle and Hale's the moulder.

HALE. If one listened to every barking dog and his insults——

RIPLEY. I don't care for your insinuations. They are my friends.

HALE. I, insinuations! You mean flattery. Shall I put it more clearly? I can give an accurate description, if you prefer.

RIPLEY. Don't play the bully! Tom, did I ever tell you what dear Nathan did when he was in a choleric mood? He pitched an unfortunate classmate thro' a closed door because the classmate was smaller and had ventured to differ with him, and it was no fault of Nathan's that the classmate wasn't killed.

HALE. Only a matter of regret.

RIPLEY. Christian spirit from the Parson.

HALE. For the man I assisted through the door was a cheat and a liar.

RIPLEY. Take care. I have half a mind to call you out.

HALE. You give yourself away, Ripley. Besides, we don't call out in Connecticut, we only throw out.

RIPLEY. There is a good deal of the—er—What shall I call you?

HALE (*amused*). Don't try. You never could frame your opinion of me in mere words.

RIPLEY. Come on, Tom, they'll be awfully disappointed.

HALE. I thought he had already told you?

RIPLEY. I thought he might have changed his mind, and he would if you would attend to your own affairs.

HALE (*good-humouredly*). And you imagine that I have forbidden him. I don't think Ripley is very complimentary to you, Tom; he suggests, as your friend, that you are a child and a tallow candle. Fertile brain, Ripley's. I never should have compared you to a stick of tallow. Now, Ripley, retire—if you don't I shall come and put you to bed.

RIPLEY. You are afraid to let me talk lest you lose your hold over Tom.

HALE. Afraid! Of what? Your oratory? Sit down, Ripley, and begin.

ADAMS. I must say, Ripley, I don't think it's very nice of you when I say I don't feel like going, for you to say I'm—— (*He stops.*)

RIPLEY. Why not? I only do it as a friend. I don't want to see you made a laughing-stock of.

HALE. In whose eyes?

RIPLEY. In the eyes of every one who isn't an hysterical saint. In the eyes of every one who is human and doesn't put on airs and breathe out beliefs that would fade into mist at the first defeat in after life.

HALE. Poor Ripley! That's the silliest speech I ever heard any one make. (*Voices are heard outside calling:* Oh, Tommy Adams! Oh, Tommy Adams!)

RIPLEY. They are calling you now. Really, Nathan, he's not like you. Tommy's alive. He couldn't spend his time mulling over musty books. You and he are antitheses, and what's the harm in Mix's Tavern? You go there yourself. I have seen you there, drinking metheglin.

HALE. It's not Mix's Tavern I object to. Far from it. But the company he keeps.

ADAMS (*interrupting*). I—hang it all, Nathan, I don't want to be thought a prig. I think I will go for a while. I said I would, you know.

RIPLEY. Back to your senses! Really, Nathan, you ought to be broad enough to see that just because a man isn't your ideal doesn't mean he can't be some one's else. (*They exeunt. Enter the blackamoor.*)

MOOR. Marse Hale, jes' a word. In case you wan' me again——

HALE. Yes!

MOOR. Ah won't be heah, that's all. Am going to bed. Good-night, sah! (*As the blackamoor goes, Thomas Meade enters.*)

MOOR (*as he leaves the stage*). Good-night, Marse Hale and Marse Meade. (*Hale and Meade say "good-night" absent-mindedly. Meade is an attractive, thick-*

set fellow, with a pleasant, smiling face. Hale pokes up the fire and puts another log on.)

MEADE (*affectionately*). What's the matter?

HALE (*looking into the fire*). I'm discouraged.

MEADE (*with wonder*). Why?

HALE. About Tom. You know how fond I am of him? Well, Ripley has him, hand and foot. Tom's young and doesn't know where he stands, and I must let him lead his own life. Do you know, I don't think I have ever had such contempt for any man as I have for Ripley. It frightens me. My one feeling when I am with him is to strangle him. (*He laughs.*) Christian spirit, isn't it? But Ripley has been talking about Linonia again, throwing mud at her fair name. And when one knows, as we know, what Linonia is and what she means to us it's unbearable. You can stand attacks in the open, but it's these stabs in the dark—— (*Knocks are heard. Enter Hull and Elisha Billings.*)

HULL. We are on the dot.

HALE. Come in, Hull. Good-evening, Elisha. I must get in the habit of calling you "sirs" now that you are graduates. (*He takes their coats and hats and puts them on his bed. More knocks are heard.*)

HULL. It's too bad there aren't more of us graduates here to-night. Bellamy is coming, and Brinsmade.

BILLINGS. But Potter and Perry and Learned have gone. (*More knocks.*)

HALE. Here they are. (*Enter Bellamy and Brinsmade. Hale shakes hands with them cordially, as does Meade.*) The reverend graduates please take the chairs here. (*They do so. Enter Beckwith, Camp, Woodbridge, Royal Flint, Baldwin, Noyes, Silas Strong, and Dana. The table is pulled back between the windows and Hale stands behind it.*)

HALE. The Sophimores be seated. (*They seat themselves on the floor.*) As Chancellor, I call the meeting of this venerable Society of Linonia to order. Scribe Thomas Meade will read the minutes of the last meeting.

MEADE. "November 4, 1772. This Honourable Society met at Alden's Room. The meeting was opened by the valedictory oration of Sir Elisha Billings of the out-going class. Then the members proceeded to elect Hale as Chancellor and also appointed Hale to make an oration on the next meeting to the departing members of Linonia. They likewise appointed Sir Dwight, Sir Davenport, and Sir Williams, Gould, Hall, Alden, Hays, Lyman, and Hale, whom they designed should take their parts in acting a comedy called 'The Conscious Lovers,' and they appointed the following to act a farce called 'The Toy Shop,' viz., Cutler, Barker, 2d, Billings, Cobb, Hall, Williams, Hale, 2d, Leonard, Mild, and Woodbridge. Thomas Meade, Scribe." (*A murmur of assent goes around.*)

HALE (*rising*). It is my honour and privilege as Chancellor of Linonia (*he speaks reverently*) to say farewell to those dear members of this Society who are about to separate from us. (*He clears his throat.*) Kind Sirs: The high opinion we ought to maintain of the ability of these worthy gentlemen, as well as the regard they have expressed for Linonia and her sons, tends *very* much to increase our desire for their longer continuance. We have the greatest reason to regret their departure. As our patrons, we have shared their utmost care and vigilance in supporting Linonia's cause and protecting her from her insulting foes. (*Hale says this with feeling.*) But as our friends (*his voice grows full of affection*), what inexpressible happiness have we experienced in their disinterested love and cordial affection? We have lived together (*his voice becomes tender and reminiscent*) not as fellow-students and members of the same college, but as brothers and children of the same family—not as superiors and inferiors, but rather as equals and companions.

Kind and generous Sirs, it is with the greatest reluctance that we are now obliged to bid adieu to you—our dearest friends. Fain would we ask you longer to

tarry, but it is otherwise determined and we must comply. Accept, then, our sincerest thanks as some return for your disinterested zeal in Linonia's cause, and your unwearied pains to suppress her opposers. Be assured that we shall always be spirited in Linonia's cause and shall ever strive to make her name shine with unparalleled lustre. Be assured that your memory will always be very dear to us, and though hundreds of miles should interfere, you will always be attended by our best wishes. May you live long and happily and at last die satisfied with the pleasures of this world and go hence to that world where joy shall never cease and pleasures never end.

Dear gentlemen—(*he pauses, showing intense feeling*) farewell! That's all. The meeting is adjourned for to-night. (*There is a general rising for departure, and talking in groups, in which they all show the deepest affection for each other.*)

HULL. Where's Nathan? I wanted to say good-bye. I am on my way to Kips Bay.

HALE. I know. Good-bye, Billy! (*He grasps Hull's hand.*)

HULL. We appreciate what you said, Nathan. (*He turns abruptly and shakes hands with the others. Alden comes over beside Nathan and puts his arm around him and admiringly congratulates him.*)

HALE. Let's not be so mournful. It's hard enough for them to leave without our being despondent. Besides, they'll all come back again. (*He goes over to Hull and says affectionately:*) And you will always be welcome. Thomas, start up a song.

MEADE. Mind you, join in the chorus. (*He sits on the table at back and begins to sing. Most of them join in, including Hale.*)

HALE (*to Hull*). Doesn't that make you feel better? (*At the conclusion Hull rises.*)

HULL. Good-bye, every one! I must say farewell! My chaise is below. (*There is a general movement of departure.*)

MEADE. We'll all come down and speed you on your way.

HULL. Don't bother!

HALE. Bother! Bless you, it's no bother. (*They all exeunt. Enter a small urchin cautiously. He tiptoes about the room, peers into the two bedrooms; then he goes to the window and waves a candle up and down. This done two or three times, he puts the candle down and goes to the fire and warms his hands, after rearranging the chairs. The door is thrown open and Gridley stands in the doorway.*)

BOY. Didn't I signal yer well, sir?

GRIDLEY. Splendidly! This way, ladies. (*Mrs. Singleton enters first. Betty Singleton comes next, then Alice Adams. She is a light-haired girl full of spirits.*)

MRS. SINGLETON. Lud! I must sit.

GRIDLEY. Allow me, madam.

MRS. SINGLETON. Upon my soul, I thought I'd never get here. You can hardly imagine in what an extremity my extremities were. New slippers, Alice. Betty, your feet together, child, and do not cross them. There is nothing more ungenteel. Girls nowadays have so little repose of manner.

ALICE. I vow you've forgotten all about that poor little boy.

GRIDLEY. So I had. Here's twopence ha'penny for you for signalling when the coast was clear.

BOY. Thanks, sir—your highness, I mean!

ALICE. But where's Nathan?

GRIDLEY. He must have slipped out. I'll warrant he went down to the Cock and Crown by way of College Street. You see, we crossed the Green. Here, Ichabod, fly down to the Cock and Crown and bring Mr. Hale back.

BOY. Zooks! but I'll fetch him. (*Exit.*)

MRS. SINGLETON. How times have changed! Lud! when I think of the luxury of to-day compared to when Mr. Singleton was in college—

ALICE. I wish they took female students here!

MRS. SINGLETON. Horrors! What a thought! Learning is so unbecoming a maiden. Nothing brings lines so quickly as Latin and Greek and vulgar arithmetic. No, child, a woman should learn to think as little as possible and never before noontime. What are you doing, Mr. Gridley?

GRIDLEY. Heating a little water and—if you'll pardon me a moment, I shall run down to the pump and fill this up.

ALICE. Oh, I thought the Freshmen did that.

GRIDLEY. They do, but I don't like to work them after eight. (*He goes out.*)

MRS. SINGLETON. Very tactful of him, my dear, for my frame is slipping. (*She touches her wig apprehensively.*) I shall retire to Mr. Hale's room for a moment.

BETTY. I think he's awfully good-looking, dear.

ALICE. Nathan?

BETTY. No, Tom.

ALICE. Oh, fudge!

BETTY. Have you ever noticed his eyes?

ALICE. What ails them?

BETTY (*indignantly*). Nothing! They are brown, that's all. (*Coming nearer to Alice.*) Tell me, what are you going to do? Mr. Ripley is most attentive, dear. I don't see how you can resist him. Oh, I know there's Nathan—but—well, I should think I'd take Nathan, dear, if I were you, he's so—well, I don't see how you know which to take. I think you are the luckiest girl to have two such admirers. Of course, Ripley has money.

ALICE. You scheming hussy! (*Suddenly.*) I'll tell you a secret. I shall take Nathan in the end.

BETTY. And you are trifling with Mr. Ripley's affections? Fie upon you! (*A rapid knock is heard.*)

ALICE. Come. (*Enter Pandora Pendleton. She is about fifteen years old, but extremely dressed. She is almost weeping and is thoroughly flustered.*)

ALICE. Why, Pandora! You alone, at a gentlemen's college?

PANDORA. I must know the truth at once. What is Hezekiah Brown?

BETTY (*with interest*). A conundrum.

PANDORA (*indignantly*). No—at least, I don't know. (*Then, her voice rising and growing more and more shrill:*) He may be almost anything.

ALICE. Pandora, my love, calm yourself.

PANDORA. Answer me, do you know Hezekiah Brown?

ALICE. A man!

PANDORA. Of course! Doesn't sound much like a spinning wheel, does he? Do you know him?

ALICE. No, I never heard of him.

PANDORA (*bursting into tears*). I knew it. I have been duped! Oh, men, the faithless creatures!

ALICE. What has happened?

PANDORA (*sobbing*). And he told me he was a Freshman and he's only a bondservant.

ALICE. He was the one you said would escort you here? Go on and tell us all.

PANDORA. I met him last week at a rout. I ought never to have gone and now I am paid for it.

ALICE. Proceed.

PANDORA. He said he was called Hezekiah Brown and his father was a Merchant Prince, and he said he was a Freshman and I believed—all.

ALICE. But what happened?

PANDORA. (*Her voice during this speech grows more and more shrill.*) Upon arriving here Hezekiah stepped backward and a horrid student with a tea-kettle said: "Here you, hurry and fill this up, and be quick about it," and Hezekiah replied: "Yes, sir," and without speaking to me he ran off with the tea-kettle and that's the last I've seen of him.

ALICE. Well! That was Mr. Gridley.

PANDORA. But don't you see?

ALICE. See what?

PANDORA. There was a sort of understanding between Hezekiah and me ever since last week.

ALICE. And his running off with a tea-kettle has proved him faithless?

PANDORA. You can laugh, but to think of his being only a servant—and I thought he was a Freshman.

ALICE (*laughing*). Oh, I see! But he is a Freshman. In college the Freshmen have to attend upon the upperclassmen and do what they tell them—carry their water and run their errands.

PANDORA (*all smiles*). Oh, you darling, you duck of a darling! You're quite in earnest?

ALICE. I should advise you, Mistress Pendleton, to do nothing in haste. You are not fifteen yet. You are in the puppy age of love.

PANDORA. Stuff! I'm only three years younger than you.

ALICE. What does your mother think? Does she know?

PANDORA. Not a word; still mamma wouldn't object, for he has heaps of money. But you needn't worry, my dear, for his father wouldn't have him marry me for anything. Hezekiah told me so himself, so he said there was no use hoping.

BETTY. Is he nice-looking?

PANDORA (*thoughtfully*). No, not exactly; he's just different-looking, that's all. (*Enter Mrs. Singleton.*)

MRS. SINGLETON. There, I am myself again. (*She seats herself.*)

PANDORA (*to Alice*). Horrors! Did she hear?

ALICE. No. She was arranging her hair in Mr. Hale's room.

MRS. SINGLETON. How did you get here, my child?

PANDORA (*to Alice*). I know she knows. I feel it.

ALICE (*to Mrs. Singleton*). Pandora's escort left her at the door.

MRS. SINGLETON. How indelicate!

ALICE. It seems Mr. Gridley sent him off on an errand, and as he was only a Freshman he had to obey.

PANDORA. I know it's tactless of me, but, Mrs. Singleton, did you hear?

MRS. SINGLETON. Hear what?

PANDORA. All—well, what I said about—Hez—Mr. Brown?

MRS. SINGLETON. Why, what did you say about Mr. Brown?

PANDORA. I said—oh, I can't say; it's a secret.

GRIDLEY (*re-entering*). I am sorry to have been away so long, but I was borrowing a flip iron.

ALICE. Where's the water?

GRIDLEY. I met a Freshman and told him to get it.

ALICE (*with a smile*). I must say I don't think it was very nice of you. You walked off with Mistress Pendleton's escort.

PANDORA. And scared me almost to death. How do you do, Mr. ——

ALICE. Gridley.

PANDORA. Gridley. (*She shakes hands.*)

GRIDLEY. I beg your pardon. It was dark and I only saw him—I—why didn't he tell me?

PANDORA. Oh—he—he has a timid nature. Yes. (*Knock is heard.*)

GRIDLEY. Come in. (*Enter Freshman.*)

FRESHMAN (*more awkward than ever*). Here's the water, sir.

PANDORA (*very embarrassed*). Oh, Mr. Brown, I'm glad you're back. I was afraid I had lost you.

GRIDLEY. I am awfully sorry, Brown, to have sent you on that errand, but I didn't see Mistress Pendleton.

BROWN. Oh, don't mention it (*he pauses*), *sir.*

GRIDLEY. Brown, won't you stay and entertain Mistress Pendleton? We are going to have some flip.

PANDORA. Oh, he'd love to.

BROWN (*awkwardly*). Yes, thank you (*hastily*), sir! (*They retire to U. R.*)

GRIDLEY. Ripley is coming in. I must say he invited himself.

ALICE. Oh, I'm glad.

BETTY. Isn't he very popular, Mr. Gridley?

GRIDLEY (*honestly, but in an embarrassed manner*). No—no!

ALICE. Nathan and all of you are jealous of him. (*Gridley has put the kettle on the crane. A knock is heard.*)

GRIDLEY. Come in! (*Enter Ripley.*)

RIPLEY. Ladies, your most obedient servant. (*He advances to Mrs. Singleton.*) Madam, I am honoured. (*He takes her hand and kisses it.*) It is indeed a pleasure, Mistress Singleton, to refresh my eyes with your beauty. (*He goes to Alice.*) Ah, Mistress Adams, I have reached Heaven at last!

ALICE. Lud! Mr. Ripley, and what book on decorum have you been reading?

RIPLEY. None but your enchanting face.

ALICE. And have you met Mistress Pendleton?

RIPLEY (*bowing*). Your servant, Mistress Pendleton.

PANDORA. How d' you do? (*She smiles.*) And this is Hezekiah Brown. He's a Freshman.

RIPLEY. Delighted to meet you. (*He bows.*)

BROWN (*with blushes*). The pleasure all is mine.

PANDORA (*aside*). That's finely said.

ALICE. Gemini! Are you going to have a tea-drinking here?

GRIDLEY. Tea-drinking! We would not be so unpatriotic. I am merely heating water for some flip. Not one fellow in college has touched a drop of tea since that infernal Stamp Act.

RIPLEY (*coldly*). No one? I still take tea, as should all loyal subjects of his Britannic Majesty.

GRIDLEY. You take no tea in here.

RIPLEY. Suppose the ladies should desire tea-drinking?

GRIDLEY. I would not so insult them. We don't

hear much in college about colonial troubles, but any one who says England has a right to treat us like slaves is out of his wits. I must say I have but little use for those New York merchants who have broken the non-importation agreement. The traitors!

RIPLEY. You forget, sir. My father was one of them; also Mistress Adams's father.

PANDORA (*excitedly*). And so was Hezekiah's father. He's a Merchant Prince.

BROWN (*very timidly*). Yes.

ALICE. Fie upon you, gentlemen, for your heat. Each has a right to his own opinion. As for these troubles, they will soon blow over and amount to that. (*She snaps her fingers.*)

GRIDLEY. Pray forgive me, Mistress Adams.

ALICE. You are forgiven.

MRS. SINGLETON. As I tell my husband, there is nothing more indelicate than discussion of the Stamp Act. There is so much danger of offence, for one can never tell who will be there. For my part, both sides may be right and both may be wrong.

RIPLEY. Ladies, I hope you will pardon me for so forgetting myself, and now to show me that you do, won't you pay a visit to my humble chambers? We can bring the flip in there when it is finished. I am sure you won't mind, Gridley, for I have a new consignment of preserves and tarts from home.

ALICE. That sounds most tempting.

BETTY. But we were going to visit here.

RIPLEY. If you will accept, Gridley, I will not mention tea-drinking.

ALICE. Oh, do! (*Then to Mrs. Singleton:*) Won't you come, Mrs. Singleton?

MRS. SINGLETON. I should be vastly pleased to see your chambers. I have already seen much of this college. We have been to the Halls of Yale, the Commons, and—Alice, wasn't that your father we saw this afternoon?

ALICE. Yes, and he couldn't find Tom anywhere. He wasn't in his room. Father is on his way to Middletown, and wasn't it odd my meeting him here? (*The door opens and Meade rushes in coatless.*)

MEADE. Could you loan me a Watts' Logic, and tell me the lesson? (*He pauses.*) Gadzooks! I beg your pardon—I—didn't know any one was in here. (*Exit in confusion.*)

ALICE (*laughing*). Poor young man! He seems a timid creature.

RIPLEY. Let me suggest that the rest of you go into my room and pull the victuals out of the hamper, and if Mistress Adams will assist me I will make the flip and bring it in. In that way, Gridley, we can feel that this is a mutual feast.

ALICE. A very affable plan. You take Betty, Mr. Gridley.

BETTY. (*She beckons and he follows.*) Poor Mr. Gridley.

BROWN. I think—I—perhaps maybe I—ought to say—that—I——

PANDORA. He thinks he'd better be going.

ALICE. And leave Mistress Pendleton?

RIPLEY. Never. I shall not hear of it. To-night you are Mr. Brown and not a Freshman.

ALICE. So escort Mistress Pendleton into Mr. Ripley's room.

PANDORA. Come on, Hezekiah. (*She drags him out.*)

MRS. SINGLETON (*as she goes*). Don't be long, Mr. Ripley. (*Exeunt.*)

RIPLEY. Do you know why I got rid of them?

ALICE (*laughing*). How could I *ever* imagine?

RIPLEY. I wanted to know if you have not unbent—a little—in your heart, since last I spoke, when you were so cruel?

ALICE. My heart and I are still the same, Mr. Ripley.

RIPLEY. Is it Hale? (*She only smiles. Ripley con-*

tinues.) I have a right to know. I have loved you for two months—devotedly.

ALICE. That is a long time.

RIPLEY. And it is not fair to hold me off.

ALICE. Fair! And how long, pray, have you been my dictator?

RIPLEY. Pardon me.

ALICE. Mr. Ripley, I shall tell you how I feel. If it were only you, why then there would be—only you. I am not flippant, my words but chanced to come that way. But there is Nathan. The truth of it is, compared to him no one else seems worth while.

RIPLEY. It is because he takes this high and mighty attitude. It's easy enough to talk.

ALICE. Nathan does not talk. He is. And what little he does preach he practises.

RIPLEY. It's easy enough to do that in college. Wait till he gets out in the world.

ALICE. I have heard it said what a man is in college he is in after life, and I like his attitude on drunkenness and riotous living and admire his manhood and courage in saying what he thinks.

RIPLEY (*hotly*). If you wish to know the truth, Hale is a hypocrite. These high moral views he takes he no more feels than——

ALICE (*with dignity*). I don't believe you, Mr. Ripley. If you think you are going to win me by vilifying your rival, you are much mistaken. Listen; I'll marry you when you prove Nathan Hale a hypocrite, and not till then. (*Alice goes out, slamming the door after her. Ripley gives a contemptuous exclamation. He goes over to the fire and takes the kettle off. The door is thrown open and Hale rushes in. He looks disappointed, then he catches sight of Ripley.*)

HALE. I thought Mistress Adams was here, and Mrs. Singleton?

RIPLEY. No, they've gone. Do you mind my heating some water?

HALE (*throwing down his hat*). Ripley, you and I may as well have a talk.

RIPLEY. You needn't stand in front of the door. I shan't try to escape.

HALE. You have been behaving in a contemptible fashion. Don't interrupt. You have been doing things no gentleman would do.

RIPLEY (*angrily*). Now look here, Hale. Do you dare say that——

HALE. I say you are no gentleman, and that you are a liar.

RIPLEY. You take advantage of your superior strength—to say that.

HALE. There are certain agreements between our Societies. You have broken all of them.

RIPLEY. How would you know if you hadn't spoken yourself to Adams?

HALE. My roommate warned me. I personally have never spoken to any under-classman. What I want to tell you now is that you are going to *desist*, for if I ever hear of you doing any more of this dirty work, I'll publicly thrash and cane you. This is not a threat, it's a promise.

RIPLEY. You're a poor loser, Hale, that's what you are. Merely because I like Adams myself and because he prefers me to you. As for your being a devoted friend of his, I see through you. How much would you care for him, if it were not for his sister? You are afraid of my winning her and so you resort to threats.

HALE (*catching him by the throat*). Take care what you say or I—— (*He pushes him roughly away from him. The door is thrown open and Adams stands in the doorway very drunk. He is trying to sing a rollicking song.*)

ADAMS. Ods-life! (*He comes into the room.*) Funniest thing! Still debating, Old Sobersides and Young Gayboy? Give it to 'em, Sobersides. Go to, my pair of cocks. (*He stops.*) Nathan, come up close, tell you

bes' jest of the century. Who do you s'pose I met at the tap-room jus' now, at the old pub—my dad—— (*He roars with laughter.*)

HALE (*seizing him by the arm*). Did he see you?

ADAMS. Funniest old fool, my dad!

HALE. Did he see you?

ADAMS. No, not yet—they tell me he's comin' and I put on my hat—think it's my hat—and go to the door and jes' as I go out the door, I hear: "You come back, you rascal! Come back here!" But I was—was—went—by that time. I told them not to tell my dad I was there. Now comes bes' jest, Nathan. Egad! I'm a wag. I told them to say—to say it was old Nath—nice, steady old Nath, who was in liquor. (*Pause.*) Damme! That's my dad on the stairs now, coming up, poundin' along. Poor old fool dad! (*Hale rushes to the door and listens. Then bolts it.*)

HALE. He is coming up. If he finds Tom here it means the end.

ADAMS (*murmuring on to himself as the other two talk*). He'll cut me off without a shillin'. Bes' jest. He's been following me, shoutin': "Mr. Hale, stop." (*He goes to fire-seat and lies down.*)

RIPLEY. Why don't you save him, as you're so devoted to him?

HALE (*quickly*). What do you mean?

RIPLEY. I mean carry out Adams' suggestion that it was you who was drunk and not he.

ADAMS. Hale drunk. Bes' jest. (*Laughs.*)

HALE (*after a moment or two of deep thought, the lines about his mouth gradually becoming more determined*). Promise me that you will hold your tongue if I do.

RIPLEY (*concealing his jubilance with difficulty*). I give you my word. (*Hale picks up Adams and carries him into his bedroom, Ripley opening the door for him. Then Hale reappears with Adams' coat, which he puts about his shoulders, and throws himself into a chair. At the same time he latches the door of his bedroom. Ripley*

opens the entry door when he sees everything in readiness. Enter Mr. Adams.)

HALE (*lolling in chair*). Enter, most beautiful lady—sit—all I want for you to do is to sit.

MR. ADAMS. Can this be Nathan Hale!

RIPLEY. He just came in, in this pitiable condition. I can do nothing with him. You will excuse me, sir. (*Exit.*)

HALE. 'Xactly, Nathan Hale. I'm enjoyin' the bes' health and hope the same of you, and how are the little ones?

MR. ADAMS. (*During this speech Tom Adams is heard laughing in a drunken way from the next room. Hale instantly covers it up with his own laugh, gradually increasing in intensity until at Mr. Adams' exit he sounds almost hysterical.*) You ought to be ashamed of yourself, sir. You, who talked to me of manly virtue; of temperance in thought, word, and action. I can't believe it. As I followed you here from that den of iniquity, Mix's Tavern, I feared 'twas my poor son. I am devoutly thankful it was not.

HALE (*laughing heavily*). Don't be so peevish. What's the odds, anyway?

ADAMS. You are the man to whom I entrusted my boy.

HALE (*laughing as though he did not have a care in the world*). Gad, sir, you look like a coffin-plate. Smile a bit. Tell you a conundrum. Why is a farm animal like a table furnishing? (*Ripley opens the door and leads Alice halfway into the room.*)

HALE (*laughing so boisterously that he can hardly speak*). Rooster cruet and vinegar cruet. (*Tom Adams suddenly opens the bedroom door and is about to lurch forward, when Hale leaps to his feet and throws himself in a drunken way against the door. Ripley hastily withdraws Alice before Hale sees her. Mr. Adams, who has turned his back on the room and has been gazing into the fire in the hope of thinking of something sufficiently crushing to say, turns abruptly.*)

MR. ADAMS. I shall write to my son, Mr. Hale, to avoid your evil company in future. It's beyond my comprehension how one can prate of goodness and yet be a hypocrite like you. (*During this speech Hale keeps up his laughter, as Tom Adams is trying to open the door.*) Good-day, sir. (*Exit.*)

(*As Hale is left alone his laughter gradually dies away, and he stands leaning against the door, all his expression gone. He turns and lifts the latch, when it strikes him that he can't bear to see Tom, so he relatches the door, and walks slowly to the centre of the room. He stands there a moment, quietly, and then with hardly any appreciable movement he strikes the chair twice with his wrist. Curtain.*)

ACT II

Three years later, Colonel Knowlton's Garden, near Turtle Bay, New York.

It is four o'clock, early in September. The scene is laid in the garden of the house occupied by Colonel Knowlton. At the right is an old colonial house, the gable end toward the audience. At the left is a hedge, and a summer-house cut in the hedge. The door of the summer-house is just seen, also the roof of it. A large pine-tree stands at the U. L., overhanging the garden. A high fence runs along at the back. There is a gate in the middle of the fence. At either side of the oak are flower-beds of hollyhocks and old-fashioned flowers. In the distance are seen Long Island Sound and Brookland Heights.

As the curtain rises, Silence Green is discovered sitting out of the window, polishing the panes. Off in the distance an English frigate is firing a salute, but the garden is sunny and quiet.

The murmur of men coming up the street is heard. The gate swings open and a crowd surges in. One or two carry muskets, but most of them are armed with heavy sticks. Their clothes are in tatters from long use and tramping through briars. Most of them are stockingless and some are barefooted. The leader, more ragged than the rest, approaches the house.

SILENCE (*catching sight of them*). Heavens to Betsey! Here, what are you doin' here? Get!

LEADER (*in an ugly mood*). I guess not.

SILENCE. What do you clowns mean by comin' into Colonel Knowlton's garden?

LEADER. We want food, clothes, and we mean to have 'em. Then we're goin' to right about face and go home.

2D FELLOW. We've had enough of this.

SILENCE. You cowards. So you are goin' to quit?

LEADER. We've had our bellyful of this army work. What's the use stayin' here waitin' to be shot? The British may be comin' any moment; they may be comin' now.

3D FELLOW. Along with them German butchers.

4TH FELLOW. They say they are as lusty as two ordinary men.

LEADER. Come on, you lads, while the coast is clear. There's victuals in the window. (*They start forward.*)

SILENCE. Don't you dare! Mistress Prutter! (*She calls, as she hastily leaves the window.*)

(*An indignant little woman appears in the doorway. She stands for a time in speechless rage, glaring at the men. They cower.*)

MISTRESS PRUTTER. Stand back, you louts! What do you mean by it, I say? Did you think you were coming into my buttery that's been freshly sanded?

LEADER. We want somethin' to eat. We ain't et nothin' since leavin' Brookland Heights two days ago.

MISTRESS PRUTTER. And you don't deserve nothin'. Why aren't you at your quarters? You're in the army, aren't you?

LEADER. We was, but——

SILENCE. They've quit.

MISTRESS PRUTTER. And you think I'm going to feed any deserters?

2D FELLOW. We're not desertin', but we're goin' home. What's the use of all this? The war will be over in a minute. We can't stand up against regular soldiers —and Germans, at that.

MISTRESS PRUTTER. I dare say you can't, but there are some who can.

LEADER. Easy words! Well, the some who can, didn't, on Brookland Heights the day before yesterday, and it will be just the same till the fools who are left are all killed.

2D FELLOW. We're not desertin'! We're not goin' over to the British, like hundreds is.

MISTRESS PRUTTER. The poltroons!

2D FELLOW. We're goin' home, that's all; back to the country.

MISTRESS PRUTTER. You needn't tell me where you come from. It's writ on your faces. A fine lot you are. You cowards!

LEADER. It's easy for you to talk, with food and drink, and clothing to wear. But when winter's comin' on, and you're like this (*he gathers his tattered shirt about him*), and when you're starvin' hungry——

MISTRESS PRUTTER. What did you think war was going to be? A picnic—a lark?

2D FELLOW. We thought we was going to have food and muskets. You can't fight bullets with pitchforks.

MISTRESS PRUTTER. Shame on you, you worthless hounds! And after all the officers have done for you, too. Captain Hale, himself, they tell me, before he joined Colonel Knowlton's Rangers, when he was near Boston, paid his men his own pittance as an officer.

LEADER. All the same, look at the house they have to live in, and look at us.

MISTRESS PRUTTER. Yes, you beauties. Look at you! We've no provisions here. Colonel Knowlton's given them all away. He eats nothin' and the only suit he owns is on his back. If I was a man, and I saw General Washington ride by on his horse, as you see him every day, with his face all lines from worry, you wouldn't catch me playin' the varmint! (*Enter Hempstead—a pleasant-looking fellow.*) Sergeant Hempstead! Bless you!

HEMPSTEAD. What's this council of war? Be off, you bumpkins!

MISTRESS PRUTTER. They're goin' to leave us. They find war isn't all beer and skittles, and so the darlings are goin' home to their mothers.

LEADER. We're off. That's flat. And we came here to beg a bit of bread.

HEMPSTEAD. Tut, man! Why, Silas, you and I were together under Captain Hale at Boston last winter. And you said you'd stick it out.

LEADER. No use, Sergeant. If we had the wherewithal to fight, and——

MISTRESS PRUTTER. He means the *pay* for his services. Faith, if they paid you what you deserved, you'd be horse-whipped. I'd do it myself, only I have my pies to make. (*She goes in.*)

HEMPSTEAD. Silas, don't be hasty! I'm afraid it's the battle at Brookland and the retreat that's taken the heart out of you. But that retreat was as gallant a thing as I've ever seen done. Not one man lost, nor a gun, and here we are now—ready for 'em.

LEADER. Yes, ready, with half the army down with the fever. Now, I may not know much about being a general, but it's madness lying here, and the British over there—across the river—on the heights above us.

HEMPSTEAD. None of that kind of talk here, and I don't intend to waste any more time with you. Can't you fools see you're fighting for your homes? Things may be black now, but we've the right on our side, and we're bound to win in the end. We held them at Bunker Hill, and see what the Carolinas have just done with Sir Peter Parker. The British are not the great things they seem when you come to fight 'em. They are only men. The whole trouble with you is you're frightened—a lily-livered crew. The very fact that we are camped *here*, all exposed, as though nothin' were at odds, is keeping his lordship back. It's gall what beats an enemy. Captain Hale has walked off with a provision ship from under

the English noses, and he did it through nothing but gall.

LEADER. What! Provision boat! Food!

HEMPSTEAD. And clothes for those as need 'em.

LEADER (*eagerly*). Where?

HEMPSTEAD. Below the landing at Turtle Bay.

LEADER. I'm off!

2D FELLOW. And so am I. (*They race out the gate and disappear down the road.*)

HEMPSTEAD. Their patriotism is in their stomachs. (*Re-enter Mistress Prutter with a pitcher of milk.*)

MISTRESS PRUTTER. Here's some milk for you that we can spare. Where are they? What have you done to them?

HEMPSTEAD. Finding I could not appeal to their hearts, I have appealed to their stomachs, and they've gone to find a provision ship that Captain Hale——

MISTRESS PRUTTER (*interrupting*). But that occurred a month ago.

HEMPSTEAD. I didn't say when. Let me have a gulp of milk.

MISTRESS PRUTTER. It's all watered for them. Come in with me and I'll get you some more. Tell me, Will, are things perking up a bit?

HEMPSTEAD (*shaking his head*). No. Everything is black.

MISTRESS PRUTTER. Poor Colonel Knowlton. It will kill him. He's ill now from it all. I sometimes wonder if it was wise—this war.

HEMPSTEAD. It was the only thing.

MISTRESS PRUTTER. What's the worry now?

HEMPSTEAD. We don't know where Lord Howe will attack. There's place after place—East River, North River, and the Sound. He has frigates—every sort of vessel. We have none. He could land anywhere—near Greenwich, Bloomingdale, Kips Bay, or Turtle Bay. Why, if he landed here and extended his lines over to Bloomingdale, he'd cut us in two.

MISTRESS PRUTTER. Why doesn't General Washington withdraw his men from New York, and bring them up here to prevent that?

HEMPSTEAD. It's what he will have to do, I'm afraid, in a day or so, unless he finds out what the rascals over there plan to do. He hates to give up New York —it's too important. (*Trying to be cheerful.*) Maybe he won't have to. There's a rumour around to-day in Knowlton's Rangers that Prescott and his troops are to be called back from Governor's Island. They are in the mouth of danger, and they can't accomplish much where they are.

MISTRESS PRUTTER. But so are you, all the time, and the rest of the Rangers—the foolhardy Rangers they are called. I wish Captain Hale had never left his Connecticut regiment and taken you with him to join that crowd.

HEMPSTEAD. I'd rather belong to it than any other—all picked men. At present we are trying to catch some Britishers and squeeze a little information out of them. Come now, Mistress Prutter, that's not dangerous. But I haven't had my milk.

MISTRESS PRUTTER. I forgot. Wait one moment. (*Exit Mistress Prutter. A voice is heard.*)

VOICE. Toby, bring my box this way. (*Enter Alice Adams, dressed most becomingly in a flowered summer dress and bonnet. She has a light mantle on her arm, and an enormous lace muff. She is followed by a diminutive black boy, who politely bows whenever he is addressed.*)

ALICE. Oh, here is some one! Is this Colonel Knowlton's house?

HEMPSTEAD. Yes, Mistress Adams.

ALICE. How, pray, did you know me?

HEMPSTEAD. I am with Captain Hale, and he has a miniature, which he lost and I found, and, of course, returned.

ALICE. Oh, really! (*She turns to the boy.*) This dear little boy is getting impatient.

BOY. 'Deed, no, Mistress Adams. Not one speck.

ALICE. You must be very careful with my box, for it contains, 'mongst other treasures, my light chintz and Kenton kerchief, a blue shalloon, to say nothing of three very elegant negligées and my new Joseph for riding; also my last assembly gown.

BOY. Ah *thought* it was heavy.

ALICE. Put it down. (*She turns.*) Why, where has that man gone?

BOY. Ah reckon he's gone to warn the household 'bout you, Mistress Adams.

ALICE. How old are you?

BOY. Lordy! Ah doan know.

ALICE. Where were you born?

BOY. Ah doan know.

ALICE. Where are your parents?

BOY. Ah doan know.

ALICE. What do you know?

BOY. Ah doan know nothin'. Plain ignorant. Doan know nothin' about nothin' and doan wanter. (*Re-enter Mistress Prutter.*)

MISTRESS PRUTTER. Mistress Adams?

ALICE. Yes.

MISTRESS PRUTTER. I'm the housekeeper, and——

ALICE. Am I expected to-day?

MISTRESS PRUTTER. Oh, yes. Mrs. Knowlton has driven over to the Hurst Farm and will soon return.

ALICE. Where is Mistress Cynthia?

MISTRESS PRUTTER. Faith—I— (*she hesitates*) Mistress Singleton is coming down.

ALICE. Oh, is Betty here?

MISTRESS PRUTTER. I'll show the boy where to put your things.

ALICE. Very well. Boy, where are you?

BOY. Ah doan know.

ALICE. I shall tell Mr. Brown about you. I've never seen such a stupid.

BOY. How's Ah to know the name of this heah place?

ALICE. Run along. (*Enter Betty Singleton.*)

BETTY. Alice, my darling!

ALICE. Betty! (*They embrace.*) Where's Cynthia? (*Mistress Prutter goes in with the boy.*)

BETTY. In the direst misery, my own. She was reading "Tom Jones" to me this morning by the river, and Mrs. Knowlton saw us, and she has given her two solid hours of spinet practice. She wept copious tears.

ALICE. Does she so hate the spinet?

BETTY. No; but "Tom Jones" was burnt. Mrs. Knowlton could not punish me, as I am only a guest.

ALICE. Betty, don't you feel wicked being inside the American lines?

BETTY. 'Tis to visit our aunt—our common aunt—and I am sure 'tis highly proper.

ALICE. I know. (*Seriously.*) I haven't seen any of our old friends for so long. I think war is a horrible thing when it divides friends and families.

BETTY. But we are nicely fixed, with our lovers both on His Majesty's side, where all true lovers belong.

ALICE. Betty, have you and Tom——

BETTY. No, dear, not yet. But he is doing splendidly, and you should be so proud of him. Wish I had a brother like that. Lord Howe says that he is very clever. Think of it! He's only twenty-one, and a lieutenant in a British regiment! (*Pause.*) You've still got that ring on.

ALICE (*quietly*). Of course, for I am still engaged.

BETTY. Alice, I don't know how to speak to you about it, but Jack Ripley is not the one for you.

ALICE (*lightly*). He's a lieutenant, along with Tom.

BETTY. Tom doesn't like him, I know! Now, I should like to know the ins and outs of your affair with Nathan.

ALICE. Nathan!

BETTY. He's a captain.

ALICE (*quickly*). Captain of the Rebels!

BETTY. Ever since that time in New Haven you've

kept mum, but something happened. Directly after telling me of your love for Nathan, you flounced around and became engaged to Jack.

ALICE. There's nothing to tell.

BETTY. Alice, there is; there must be. And I am dying to know, for I am sure it's a lovely secret.

ALICE. Did you observe how haggard and poor they all seem over here compared to Staten Island? The English officers know how to dress so well!

BETTY. Tom says he can't understand you in regard to Nathan. He says Nathan in college did more for him than any one else in giving him sound advice, and——

ALICE. Fudge! Any one can give advice. I don't see why you should talk like this when you know it's distasteful to me.

BETTY. It's very silly of you. And he's worth ten Ripleys. And he has made a splendid record so far. Every one admires, but you, and loves him.

ALICE. I know him.

BETTY (*catching her eye*). What does that mean? (*Enter Mistress Pendleton. She looks older, and is dressed in a much beflounced muslin.*)

ALICE. Pandora!

PANDORA. Don't get up. I can kiss you both just as well sitting down. (*She proceeds to do so over the back of the garden seat.*) You've been on Staten Island, haven't you?

BETTY. Yes. Among the British.

PANDORA (*flying around the end of the seat and sitting between them*). Gemini! but I envy you. And Alice, I hear you're engaged to one of them.

ALICE. It happened months before the war, and he's a Tory.

PANDORA. I suppose he is very good-looking, but I never understood about you and Nathan Hale. What was it? Was he hard to talk to? I tried to—a fortnight since. I grew more and more embarrassed and less and less happened. It really would be a terrible under-

taking, being engaged to a man like that. Awfully nice, but very wearing.

ALICE. The trouble is, the Rebels haven't time for us. They think of nothing but their rights and this absurd war and——

BETTY. On what side is your friend, Hezekiah Brown?

PANDORA. He's not on either. He can't waste the time. He is to succeed his father in business; and, of course, getting shot, if only in the leg, would be such a hindrance. But, my dear, I have my worries. Everything was gliding along. I've talked to mamma for three solid years about Hezekiah, and she gave me her consent. Then came the battle of Brookland Heights at quite the wrong time, and of course the British will take New York. So mamma won't allow Hezekiah in the house.

ALICE. But what has that to do with it?

PANDORA. Don't you see? She wants me to marry a lord or something ridiculous like that. If I have trouble talking to Nathan Hale, imagine me with a lord. Ugh!

ALICE (*with sudden feeling*). Don't marry the wrong man, dear.

PANDORA. Oh, Alice, say it again. You said it just the way they do at the play-house. I dote on plays.

ALICE (*with a smile*). I mean it. If you've found the right man, even if it's——

PANDORA. "Even if it's Hezekiah"? He's very nice. Of course he doesn't look like much and he never says much, but I am sure he thinks a lot——

ALICE (*laughing*). A lot of you. I wasn't speaking slightingly of Mr. Brown. I was going to say, "Even if it's some one your mother does not like"—you ought to marry him if he's the one. You will never be happy if you have to turn your back upon your heart.

PANDORA. Don't, or I shall weep. You make me feel, dear, like Juliet. (*Her voice rises into a high chok-*

ing squeak.) I'll never marry anybody but Hezekiah, and that's flat. (*Enter Mistress Prutter.*)

MISTRESS PRUTTER. Captain Hale and Lieutenant Meade have come to pay their respects, Mistress Singleton.

PANDORA. Good-bye. I must go. I suppose next week our house will be in the middle of the British lines. Isn't it tiresome? The Rebels will retreat and the English will move up. That gives me one week before the coming of the lord (*she sneezes*) mamma's picked out for me.

BETTY. Why don't you elope?

PANDORA. Hezekiah's in Philadelphia with a ship.

BETTY. That doesn't matter.

PANDORA. You can't elope by yourself, ninny—any more than you can marry alone. That's what elope means—it means two.

BETTY. Get in the stage to-night and go to Philadelphia. I think it's a lovely plan, and you may be attacked by highwaymen.

PANDORA (*doubtfully*). 'Um—I've never read of that sort of an elopement, never. And—he might not be in Philadelphia and I might not find him, and so get lost, and I would almost rather marry a lord than to be lost in Philadelphia—and I really don't know him well enough to go all that distance—it takes two days—and tell him to marry me. He might be at dinner, and how embarrassing that would be. Good-bye. I think I'll —I think I'll wait. (*Exit.*)

MISTRESS PRUTTER. Captain Hale and Lieutenant Meade have come to pay their respects to you, Mistress Singleton.

BETTY. Where are they?

MISTRESS PRUTTER. In the parlour.

BETTY. Tell them to come out, will you?

ALICE. No, don't. I don't care to see Captain Hale.

BETTY. Fie! You have the vapours. I am going to bring them out.

ALICE. Then I shall go in. I mean it, Betty.

BETTY (*to Mistress Prutter*). Then tell them I shall be with them directly.

ALICE. Where is that little nigger?

BETTY. Who do you mean?

ALICE. A little nigger the Browns lent me this morning, when I left Brookland.

MISTRESS PRUTTER. He's eating bread and sugar in the buttery.

ALICE. I want to give him sixpence before he goes. Tell him, will you?

MISTRESS PRUTTER. Yes, Mistress Adams. (*Exit.*)

BETTY. What will you do till I get back?

ALICE. Go to my room and unpack. Betty— (*She acts embarrassed.*) Don't think me horrid about Nathan, but I haven't seen him for three years, and——

BETTY. You still love him?

ALICE (*indignantly*). That's not it at all. (*She walks into the house, Betty following her with a shrug of the shoulders. The gate at the back opens with a click, and Colonel Knowlton enters. He is a large, kindly looking man. At present he seems worried. Captain Hull follows him. As the gate swings to behind them, Colonel Knowlton turns.*)

COL. KNOWLTON (*as if to avoid being heard*). Well, Hull, what luck? Were you able to get any information?

HULL. I am very sorry, Colonel Knowlton. None.

COL. KNOWLTON. Not one of the prisoners opened his mouth?

HULL. Only a Hessian.

COL. KNOWLTON. What did he say?

HULL. He spoke in German, so——

COL. KNOWLTON. Doesn't any one know German?

HULL. I do, a little.

COL. KNOWLTON. Well!

HULL. He didn't know anything about Howe's intention, and wasn't interested. All he wanted was some beer, and not small beer.

COL. KNOWLTON. There are only two ways left us, Hull. We have got to have that information. It's a necessity, if our newly declared Independence is to endure. One way is to buy information from a Tory.

HULL. How do you intend to do that?

COL. KNOWLTON. I am already in communication with one of those unnatural hounds, and am expecting him here now.

HULL. And the other way, sir?

COL. KNOWLTON. Is to send a spy!

HULL. You'll pardon my saying so, but neither way seems very practical to me. For the Tory who would sell information, I wouldn't trust, and a spy—that sort of person could only get below-stairs gossip.

COL. KNOWLTON. You might inform your brother officers that I would like to see them in my office, in half an hour. Then if that Tory has disappointed me, I shall ask for a spy.

HULL. You mean from among us?

COL. KNOWLTON. Yes.

HULL. It's a dog's work. It's too much to ask of a man.

COL. KNOWLTON. It will only be asked as the last resort. Mind you, Hull, there will be no command about it. The one who goes, goes as a volunteer. See you, then. (*Exit.*)

(*Hull, with a deep sigh, turns on his heel and goes out of the gate. Suddenly a little boy sticks his head through the hedge at L. L. and crawls through. He is followed by four others—two of them barefooted. The leader, however, is fully dressed in a velvet suit and wears a three-cornered hat. He looks like a pocket-edition macaroni.*)

BILDAD. Ods-fish! You chaps are slow. How do you expect we ever can fight if you creep along like that?

TIMOTHY. Now, Bildad, don't be hasty. Let's wait and talk it over.

BILDAD. 'S death! Hang you all for a sorry crew.

We've talked the matter out. (*The little coon appears on the porch still munching his bread.*)

BILDAD (*catching sight of him*). Here, you. Run and inform your master that some gentlemen would have words with him.

BOY. Some gelmen? Where are they?

BILDAD. I and those others. Don't stand there like a gawk. Do as I say.

BOY. But my master lives ways from here. Way down to New York, then way cross the ferry to Brookland, then way to Wallabout Bay. Ah can't run that far. My breath won't las'.

BILDAD. Enough! Tell Colonel Knowlton I wish to speak to him.

BOY. Ah doan know who he is. Ah certainly doan, nor where he lives.

BILDAD. He lives in there. Scoot!

BOY. Yes, sah. (*He looks dubiously at Bildad; then as Bildad pulls out an enormous pistol he flies into the house.*)

BILDAD (*as he puts the pistol back in his belt*). Gad, I can hardly wait. Think of really fighting, and everything powder and blood.

TIMOTHY. We'd better wait until to-morrow.

BILDAD. Oh, bullets! What's the matter with you all? I thought you wanted to fight. You chicken-hearted puts, brace up!

ASHER. I'm not a put, Bildad. I want to fight.

TIMOTHY. I'm not a coward, Bildad. You take that back!

SOLOMON. Yes, Bildad.

BILDAD. Prove it. Then I'll take it back.

SOLOMON. You've got a soft pate, Bildad. That's what ails you. Boys don't go to war. Dad says they would only be in the way.

BILDAD. Nimcompoop! It's the powder-horn and the shot that does the harm, and not the size of the man who shoots it.

SOLOMON. What would your mother say?

BILDAD. She'll be grieved when I'm shot, of course; but she'll put a wreath on my grave. (*Little nigger re-enters.*)

BOY. Ah found 'im, sah. And he was dretful busy, but Ah told 'im it was a matter of life and death and he's comin'. He's kinder angry.

TIMOTHY. We'd better go.

SOLOMON. Yes, Bildad.

BILDAD. Go, if you're afraid, you weak poltroons, you! (*They stand hesitating. Enter Colonel Knowlton.*)

COL. KNOWLTON (*to the nigger*). Where's the man you said was waiting for me?

BILDAD (*stepping forward*). I am. How do you do, Colonel Knowlton?

COL. KNOWLTON. You! Do you mean to say you had the impudence to send in for me when I was at work?

BILDAD. It's very important. Stand by me, you chaps. Don't shrink away.

COL. KNOWLTON. You have a message? Tell me quickly.

BILDAD. We want to join the army.

COL. KNOWLTON. What!

BILDAD. We are good shots, and are very brave. (*At this the cringing companions of Bildad pull themselves together.*) We have practised on squirrels.

COL. KNOWLTON. Squirrels and enemies are different matters, my child.

BILDAD. Yes; squirrels are harder to hit. But we are not children. We only haven't grown fast.

COL. KNOWLTON (*kindly*). I'm sorry, but we haven't any room for you. Good-day, sir.

BILDAD. We wouldn't take much room. We could squeeze into an awful little hole. Can't we? (*They murmur "Um-um."*) Please take us. We'll be very good and do everything we are told.

COL. KNOWLTON. Then go home immediately. Why,

my little chap, a battlefield is no place for you. You would only get hurt.

BILDAD (*with dignity*). We would all expect to get hurt and killed—every one of us. Wouldn't we? (*A half-hearted "yes" is given.*)

COL. KNOWLTON. The entire number of you? But what a pity! It wouldn't do any good, and would make your mothers very unhappy. I only wish, Captain, that half my men had your spirit. Good-day. (*He goes in.*)

BILDAD. Ods-life! He thinks us a jest. We'll show him. Are you chaps ready to follow me?

SOLOMON. Yes—perhaps.

ASHER. Maybe.

BILDAD. Then listen. We'll fight the English by ourselves with our own band. We'll creep into their camp and shoot them, and——

SOLOMON. Supposing we are caught?

BILDAD. We'll die soldiers' deaths! But come to our barn chamber and swear our oaths and make our plots.

ASHER. Very well, but I don't want to be a soldier. I want to go fishing.

TIMOTHY. You're awful hasty, Bildad.

BILDAD. Have to be in war. (*He stalks out, the others following.*)

(*Alice enters. She looks unhappy. She walks listlessly to the centre of the garden and stops; then turns as if to go into the house. She thinks better of it and pauses. Then with a little involuntary heart-broken cry, "Oh, Nathan!" she walks toward the gate. The cries of an excited crowd are heard in the distance. Alice rushes to the gate and looks down the road. The noise increases, and Alice draws back as though frightened. The gate is dashed open and a man with shirt and stock disarranged enters, out of breath and frightened.*)

MAN (*breathlessly*). Alice! You here!

ALICE. Jack!

RIPLEY. They're after me! Hide me!

ALICE. Go into the summer-house. (*He darts in,*

and she closes the door behind him, then seats herself in the doorway and pretends to be half asleep. The gate is swung open.)

HEMPSTEAD (*at the head of a mob*). This way! Oh, I beg your pardon, Mistress Adams, but did any one come in here?

ALICE (*yawning*). What? What is it?

HEMPSTEAD. Did a man come in here?

ALICE. Has a prisoner escaped?

HEMPSTEAD. No; but when I left here about fifteen minutes ago I saw some one skulking by the front gate. I followed him down the road to the coffee-house, and I recognised him. He's one of those dirty Tory spies.

ALICE. You may be wrong.

HEMPSTEAD. No! I know him. I knew him before the war, and he is a Tory.

ALICE. What do you intend to do?

HEMPSTEAD. What men generally do with spies. Hang him to the nearest tree. Which way did he go?

ALICE. Let me think. I was dreaming here, with my eyes half closed, and I heard some one run past me, down that path, thro' Beekman meadow.

HEMPSTEAD. Thanks. This way, men! Come on! (*Exeunt.*)

ALICE (*after waiting a moment, cautiously opens the door*). You've not a moment to lose, Jack. Why did you come?

RIPLEY. I wanted to see you.

ALICE (*touched*). And you ran all that risk only for that?

RIPLEY. What greater reason could I have? (*He starts to take her hand.*)

ALICE. Don't! You must go; go quickly.

RIPLEY. I'll take my chances. I'm not afraid.

ALICE. You mustn't be foolhardy. Besides, I'm going back to Staten Island in a week, and you can see me then. I have something particular to say. (*Suddenly.*) I don't understand your coming here to-day.

RIPLEY. I couldn't wait till next week. A wild whim seized me. What did you want to talk to me about?

ALICE. I was going to tell you that—oh, it seems so cruel to tell you now.

RIPLEY. What is it?

ALICE. I want you to release me.

RIPLEY. Nonsense!

ALICE. But, Jack, I don't love you, and— Of course, if you insist, I shall fulfil my promise—my rash, foolish promise.

RIPLEY. A very wise promise. Why do you call it foolish?

ALICE. Because I believed so in——

RIPLEY (*contemptuously*). Nathan!

ALICE. Some one's coming. (*She pushes Ripley back into the summer-house, and closes the door as Hale appears on the threshold.*)

HALE. My compliments, Mistress Adams. You don't know how much I regret appearing at such a moment.

ALICE. So you've been eavesdropping?

HALE. Call it what you will.

ALICE. What if I told you it was Tom?

HALE. 'Twould make no difference. As an officer I have no choice. But I know who it is.

ALICE. Nathan—Captain Hale! The man in there came to see me. I give you my word of honour that is the sole reason for his visit.

HALE. If it is the only reason for his visit, Colonel Knowlton will doubtless release him.

ALICE. You are going to tell Colonel Knowlton?

HALE. I must. Believe me, I am sorrier than you know, Mistress Adams, but—I must. (*Ripley suddenly appears.*)

RIPLEY. Don't waste your time, Alice, or humiliate yourself pleading with him. What chance have I with Hale? This is what he has been waiting for all these years.

ALICE. Please let him go.

RIPLEY. Do you think he can ever forgive me for being engaged to you? For winning you?

ALICE (*sharply*). Why do you talk like that when you want him to spare your life?

HALE (*coldly*). You're wrong, Ripley. The fact that you are engaged to Mistress Adams is the *one* reason I have for wishing to let you go.

ALICE. Then you will?

HALE. I can't. (*He blows a whistle.*)

ALICE. Jack is right. You are only doing this because you hate him and you've always treated him abominably—talked about him behind his back.

HALE. And said the same things to his face.

ALICE. Personally, I admire him very much, more than you, for he is not a hypocrite.

RIPLEY. Don't worry, dear. Colonel Knowlton will believe you if Hale won't. (*Hale walks to the back to get the sentry, and Alice wanders nervously toward the summer-house. Enter Knowlton on the porch.*)

KNOWLTON. Ah, Mr. Ripley, come in. You're a trifle late. (*Ripley glances toward Hale and Alice and makes a few ineffectual attempts to stop Knowlton.*)

RIPLEY. Good-evening, Colonel; I—er—— (*Exit.*)

(*Hale says nothing for a time.*)

ALICE. Captain Hale, what does it mean?

HALE. You had better ask him.

ALICE. It means treachery. (*She turns her back.*) And he said it was to see me; that was why he was so brave. But, Captain Hale, if he was to meet Colonel Knowlton, why did he come here running for his life?

HALE. He may have lost his passport. He may have been enjoying the game, knowing he held a trump card.

ALICE. A traitor! Oh, it's horrible!

HALE (*trying to comfort her*). Maybe there is a reason, Mistress Adams. Don't feel so badly. Perchance he's

a spy and not a traitor (*Hale stiffens as he considers the probability of this*)—and is selling Colonel Knowlton false information.

ALICE. Oh, he wouldn't do that.

HALE. It is better than being a traitor. (*She does not answer. Hale continues:*) I can soon find out.

ALICE. How?

HALE. I'll bait a trap. (*He takes a despatch-case from his pocket.*) I have some orders here from General Washington concerning the removal of troops from Governor's Island to-morrow. I'll leave them here with my coat, and then if he attempts to take them when he comes out, I—— (*Men are heard coming from L. L. Hale looks wonderingly toward L. L.*)

ALICE. It's the search party coming back.

HALE. And you gave them a false scent? (*Enter Hempstead.*)

HEMPSTEAD. We couldn't find him, Mistress Adams. (*He sees Hale and salutes.*)

HALE. Hempstead, I want to speak to you.

HEMPSTEAD. Yes, Captain. (*He says something in a low voice to his men and they go.*)

HALE. I am going to leave this packet here.

ALICE. Captain Hale—and then if Jack Ripley is caught—it means his death?

HALE. True! (*To Hempstead:*) Wait. (*Hempstead retires.*)

ALICE. Perhaps it's better not to prove him a spy and let him go.

HALE. I can't, for if he were a spy and I let him go, it would be rank disloyalty to my country. As long as I have this suspicion, I—— (*Enter the little nigger from the house.*)

BOY. Here Ah is.

ALICE. What?

BOY. The lady said you had a sixpence for me and Ah bin waitin' very patient.

ALICE. Oh, you poor little thing. Here— (*She*

gives a sixpence to him.) Now go, and here, this is for your ferry fare. (*She gives him an extra twopence.*)

HALE. I have it. (*To the boy:*) Ask Mistress Prutter for ink and quill. (*The boy goes.*)

ALICE. What is your plan? What are you going to do?

HALE. Ripley shall go through the lines in safety——

ALICE. But you just said your duty——

HALE. I haven't time to discuss it now, Mistress Adams. May I ask you to withdraw?

ALICE. I don't understand. (*Exit.*)

HALE. Hempstead! (*Hempstead comes forward.*) The man you have been hunting is closeted with Colonel Knowlton.

HEMPSTEAD. What!

HALE. Selling him information. But I think he's a spy. I want you to stand outside the hedge—better be walking back and forth as tho' on guard. When I whistle, rush to the gate with two or three others and start in pursuit, but don't catch him for at least half a mile. When you do, he will give you a permit from Colonel Knowlton and you can release him.

HEMPSTEAD (*blankly*). But, Captain Hale——

HALE. I haven't much time to tell you, Hempstead, for he may be out any moment. I have some signed orders here from General Washington, which I was to fill out according to the signals he sent me, by flag, from Harlem Heights, as to when and how Prescott evacuates Governor's Island. It is to be done this afternoon and it is of the utmost importance that the British are otherwise engaged. So I am filling out this false despatch ordering Putnam to proceed to Paulus Hook, and if Ripley will only take it thro' the lines for us, then we'll have the Britishers watching Paulus Hook Ferry in the North River and we will have the East River all to ourselves. I can't explain further—go! In case he does not take the despatches no whistle will be blown. (*Hempstead retires. Enter little nigger.*)

BOY. Heah's your ink, Captain, and quill, and Ah brought yer the sand-box. (*Hale, without saying anything, rapidly fills out a military order and sands it. Then he folds it up and sticks it in his despatch-case. He slides off his coat and hat.*)

HALE. Boy, hold these for me till I come back. (*He puts the coat on the boy's arm and hands him the despatch-case.*) Hold that firmly in one hand and don't budge, and don't let any one touch it. Now, mind. Don't you move, even if it takes me thirty minutes to wash my hands. Here's sixpence. (*Exit. The little darky gets restless as he stands first on one foot and then on the other. Enter Colonel Knowlton and then Ripley.*)

KNOWLTON. Good-day, sir. I am more than grateful. You have your pass?

RIPLEY. Yes, thank you. (*Colonel Knowlton retires. Ripley slowly comes down the steps, an expression of ill-concealed satisfaction on his face. He slowly buttons his coat. As he does so he sees the darky boy.*)

RIPLEY. What are you doing?

BOY (*with disgust*). Waiting for a gen'leman to primp and wash hisself.

RIPLEY. What have you got there?

BOY. His things. (*Ripley looks about thoughtfully.*)

RIPLEY. Who was it?

BOY. One of these heah officers.

RIPLEY (*looks around, and a sentry walks by. He shrugs his shoulders and walks toward the gate. Then he stops again*). Boy, let me look at that packet.

BOY. No, sir-ree. Hands off.

RIPLEY. Be quiet, you little fool. I think it's mine.

BOY. No, sir! Not much.

RIPLEY (*taking him by the arm*). Let me see it quickly. (*He measures the distance to the gate with his eye.*) You make one sound and I'll choke you. (*Ripley snatches the despatch-case from him and a paper falls out. Ripley hears the guard and puts his foot on it. He also puts one hand firmly over the terrified little darky's mouth.*)

How old are you? (*The guard passes. Ripley picks up the paper hurriedly and glances at it.*)

RIPLEY (*to himself*). George Washington! It's genuine. (*He dashes across the stage and disappears at U. L. The boy as soon as he is released gives a piercing yell.*)

BOY. Thief! Thief! (*Hale appears and blows a whistle. At the same time Hempstead and others rush thro' the gate.*)

HALE. He went that way, quick! (*Hempstead and men dash off after him at top speed. Enter Colonel Knowlton at L. R. from the house.*)

KNOWLTON. What is it?

HALE. Ripley has proved himself to be a British spy.

KNOWLTON. What? Impossible! Why, he told me he was heartily ashamed of the position he had taken and wanted to make reparation.

HALE. He stole my despatches, all the same.

KNOWLTON. Since he was with me?

HALE. Yes, sir. I baited a trap.

KNOWLTON. Where is he?

HALE. Gone.

KNOWLTON. You let him go?

HALE. I made out a false despatch as a bait for Ripley to steal, ordering Putnam to proceed to Paulus Hook the tenth instant. And, if it works, Prescott will have an open chance to leave Governor's Island, for the British will be on a false scent.

KNOWLTON. And you think he didn't suspect?

HALE. The signature is genuine. General Washington gave me two blank orders signed with his signature, to use in case he decided to send General Heath from Bloomingdale down to assist Prescott. But he signalled not to.

KNOWLTON. What made you think of it, Nathan?

HALE. I know it was presumptuous of me, but I was in a dilemma. That villain Ripley is engaged to be married.

KNOWLTON. He told me he was engaged to Alice Adams, my niece.

HALE. It would have been cruel to her if he were hung. Of course, as I suspected him, I couldn't let him go, and so I conceived this way out of it.

KNOWLTON. This is a bitter disappointment to me. He told me that Lord Howe intended to attack near Bloomingdale in two days' time, and I had dreams of repulsing them. One victory would put so much heart into our soldiers. (*Enter Mistress Prutter.*)

MISTRESS PRUTTER. Captain Hull wanted me to inform you that the officers have arrived.

KNOWLTON. Tell them I am here.

MISTRESS PRUTTER. Yes, sir. Pardon me, but you haven't touched your dinner yet.

KNOWLTON. Thank you, Mistress Prutter, but I have not the time.

MISTRESS PRUTTER. Shall I not bring you out some metheglin and a piece of loaf cake, or a wine-glass of sherry, sir?

KNOWLTON. Not now. You might leave them on the dresser for me. (*Exit Mistress Prutter. Knowlton continues to Hale.*) Nathan, our country can't lose now, with the Declaration of Independence only a month old and with the ink not dry upon it, with the sunrise of freedom just beginning to appear over the edge of the horizon. But we are in a critical state. One defeat now would mean the end. (*Enter Hull, Tallmadge, Alden, Gridley, Meade, and one or two others. Hale greets them affectionately, tho' inconspicuously.*)

KNOWLTON (*on steps*). Gentlemen, I wanted to talk to you informally for a few moments. You men belonging to my company—boys, most of you—but still men, have done glorious work in the past and have won a reputation for self-sacrifice and courage. I have now a proposition to offer which will be repellent to every man of you. As a new country we have reached a crisis. We are fighting for well-loved homes, for freedom, for the

rights of men. Our duty to ourselves and to our self-respect has compelled us to renounce our duty to our King. We have cut down our bridges behind us in declaring our independence, and we are now fighting—right against might, and if we only can tide over these next few months, I feel confident all will be well. In this emergency General Washington feels it is of the utmost necessity to learn what is going on within the British lines and to find out what are Lord Howe's intentions. If he fails to do so, it will in all probability mean the extinguishing of our country's hope. With such a vast area as we have to protect and so few, relatively, to do it, concerted and unexpected attack on the part of the enemy must necessarily end in our defeat. General Washington is searching for a man who is willing to obtain this information. It requires one who has courage, alertness, and, above all, self-sacrifice. Are there any of you willing to undertake the mission?

HULL. To be a spy?

KNOWLTON. Yes. The word is odious, but being so makes your sacrifice all the greater.

HULL. This is too much to ask of men.

KNOWLTON. The country doesn't ask it. It is only for you to give it, if you will.

ALDEN. We are willing to fight in the open, to do honest work.

HULL. And die a soldier's death. The work of a spy is too repulsive and low. Why can't you get some mercenary?

KNOWLTON. It requires a man of brains and intelligence; a man who can ingratiate himself with the officers.

HULL. And then betray the confidences. 'Um, the man you have in mind and the spy are not the same beings.

KNOWLTON. So you would not care to do it, Captain Hull?

HULL. I must decline.

KNOWLTON. And you, Tallmadge?

TALLMADGE. No, I can't.

KNOWLTON. I don't blame you, my boys!

HALE. I'll undertake it.

HULL. You! (*Hale nods slightly.*)

KNOWLTON. Think twice, Nathan.

HULL. You shan't. It's monstrous!

KNOWLTON. Much as I want this done, I can't let you do it without counting the cost. It means almost certain death, and a bitter, ignominious death, away from your friends, alone among your foes. And, worst of all, it means doing things that no man can bear to do.

HALE (*quietly*). I understand.

HULL. It's impossible! Why, Nathan is the most honest of us all. You shan't. (*Hale does not answer.*)

ALDEN. I implore you to think again. You could not be a spy with your face and bearing. It wants some scrubby fellow.

HULL. And, Nathan, you are not well yet. You have hardly recovered from your recent illness. Nathan (*he seizes him by the arm*), talk it over with me first, will you?

KNOWLTON. There's a good suggestion, Nathan. Let me know later what you decide. I don't want you men to think I am asking too much, but it's only our terrible need. (*Exit Knowlton.*)

GRIDLEY. Nathan (*he puts his arm about him*), we can't afford to lose you.

HALE. I think I owe to the country the accomplishment of such an important object. Our Commander needs the information, and what other way is there of obtaining it than by assuming disguise and passing into the enemy's camp?

GRIDLEY (*brokenly*). You talk to him, Billy. (*They silently withdraw, Gridley saying emphatically:*) It's monstrous!

HULL. Nathan, you don't realise what it means to be a spy.

HALE. I know. I have always looked upon a spy as a loathsome thing.

HULL. It means throwing away your life.

HALE. The question is, in what service I may do the most for my country, and I think this is the one.

HULL. But look at your career, man! Look what you have begun! It is not right that anything so fine, so bright, should end in an ignominious death.

HALE (*throwing his arm sympathetically about Hull*). I am fully aware of the consequences of discovery and capture. But for a year I have been attached to the army. I have not rendered any service in return. I am not after name or fame, Billy, but I want to be useful.

HULL. A country has no right to demand the moral degradation of her sons.

HALE. Degradation! It's a privilege. Every kind of service necessary to the public good becomes honourable by being necessary. If my country demands a peculiar service, its claims to performing that service are imperious.

HULL. Think of your family—and us. (*Hale quickly puts his arm around Hull and takes his hand, and after holding his hand a moment speaks.*)

HALE (*partly to himself*). War means sacrifice. (*He pauses.*) I will think it over, tho', and do nothing but what duty demands. William, I hear Alice coming, and I——

HULL. And you still care?

HALE (*nods his head in answer*). I want to say goodbye, only she is not to know.

HULL. Nathan—— (*He cannot say more.*)

HALE (*affectionately*). You are a dear old soul. (*Exit Hull. Enter Alice. She appears happy.*)

ALICE. Nathan, Colonel Knowlton has just told me (*Hale looks apprehensive*) about letting Ripley go—for me, and I want to thank you. (*He takes her hand without speaking.*) Nathan, I don't know why I ask you, but I must. Tell me, wasn't there some mistake—when I saw you disguised in liquor, three years ago, in New Haven, in your room?

HALE. You saw me? I don't wonder you lost your opinion.

ALICE. But, Nathan, can't you explain it? It would make such a difference to me.

HALE. I can't explain. (*He smiles at her.*)

ALICE (*her tone changing*). Good-night.

HALE (*after a pause*). Good-night! (*She turns to go in and the curtain falls.*)

ACT III

New York. A hall in the Hurst House (occupied by Lord Percy), on the evening of September 21, 1776.

There is a gallery at the back, from which leads a stairway to the hall beneath. There is a door at L. R. At the left is a window recess with curtains. The room is decorated for a ball. Festoons of green are hung about the room, and a profusion of flowers. There are few chairs, and at L. R. is a sofa. The entrance door is under the gallery at back, and when it opens from time to time Long Island Sound is seen in the moonlight. There are old portraits on the walls. At the back on the left is a table with punch-bowl.

Before the curtain rises, the scraping of fiddles is heard, playing a rollicking country dance.

The curtain rises on the dance "Money Musk." The officers taking part are all in military costume—the English in white satin small-clothes and scarlet coats, with powdered wigs; the Royal Highlanders in kilts and scarlet coats and white wigs, and a few Hessians in Hessian uniforms.

PANDORA. Hezekiah, they are not blue. They are green.

HEZEKIAH BROWN. Yes, Pan, they are blue; I swear it. And your cheeks are just like cherries.

PANDORA. Sh! Some one might hear. (*She giggles in a way that sounds like a shrill war-whoop.*)

(*As the dance concludes, some of the couples go over to the small table under the balcony, for punch. Others push open the door at the back and go out to get the fresh air. One couple come down the stage and sit in the window recess at L. R.*)

PANDORA (*to Hezekiah*). Come over here, my duck. (*She pulls him by the hand over to the window at L. L.*) Faith, I haven't had a chance to speak since you went to Philadelphia. Let's whisper. (*Mistress Betty Singleton, who looks radiantly happy, walks down to L. L. and seats herself on the sofa. She is attended by Lieutenant Fitzhugh, an attractive Scotsman.*)

FITZHUGH. 'Fore George! I haven't had such a romp in ages. (*He wipes his face with an elaborate handkerchief.*)

BETTY. Money Musk is danced at all routs in this country. I vow, it must seem barbaric to you.

FITZHUGH. Never, Mistress Betty. It has a very pleasant swing and, ods-life, there is such beauty here!

BETTY. Fie! You have a smooth tongue, Lieutenant Fitzhugh. But wait till you see my cousin Alice Adams. We have but now arrived from the American lines. (*With feeling.*) Oh, I'm so tired of this war.

PANDORA (*from the other side of room*). Fudge! Now, I'll not believe you. (*Giggles, and then silence.*)

FITZHUGH (*laughing*). War! Don't call it war. It's only a wee riot and soon quelled. But tell me about your wonderful cousin.

BETTY. She is sitting out on the balcony with Lord Percy.

FITZHUGH. Then there is no need to tell me more of her.

BETTY. Why, pray?

FITZHUGH. What chance have I with him? (*Enter Tom Adams. He is dressed as an English officer, in white satin breeches and scarlet coat with powdered wig, and patches on his cheek.*)

BETTY. Why, there's Tom! (*She holds out her hand.*)

ADAMS. Mistress Betty, this is an unexpected pleasure. I had quite despaired of your coming. (*Tom bows to Fitzhugh.*) Is Alice here? I've something most important to tell her. (*Pandora giggles again.*)

BETTY. Yes, she's with his lordship. And isn't it odd? We are stopping in the very house we were visiting Colonel Knowlton in, two weeks ago. I feel so sorry for them, retreating bit by bit.

FITZHUGH. Don't waste your pity. The Yankees are so puffed, I hear, over that skirmish at Harlem Heights two days ago, that there is no bearing them.

BETTY. Here come Alice and Lord Percy.

ADAMS (*coming over to her*). After I've seen her will you come out in the garden with me?

BETTY. Perchance. (*She smiles at him.*) You look monstrous well in your breeches and coat.

ADAMS. Now, don't poke fun.

BETTY (*teasingly*). I'm not. (*Lord Percy and Mistress Adams come down the stairs talking together. She has powdered hair and a pink brocade. Lord Percy, on the other hand, is in the clothes of a London dandy, white satin breeches, white silk embroidered stockings, a velvet coat of cherry colour, a lace stock, and many ribbons and orders. He is young and of commanding presence.*)

ALICE. Tom, dear! (*She embraces him, then turns to his lordship.*) He's my brother, you know.

PERCY (*smiling*). I inferred as much. Besides, he told me.

BETTY. Alice, let me present Lieutenant Fitzhugh.

FITZHUGH. Your servant, Mistress Adams.

PERCY. I vow, Mistress Betty, you look even fairer than when I last saw you, and that is saying much. You ladies have no conception of the debt we owe you. We would all be perishing of ennui but for you, waiting for this absurd war to be over. I don't wish to complain about America, but really there is little to do here for a foreigner. There is only one theatre on Broadway Street, with but an indifferent company, and Ranelagh

Gardens. I suppose if one lived here and got into the life it would be a vastly different matter—but not for me.

ALICE. You pine for England, my lord?

PERCY. Egad! I do, or rather did until I met you. But mark my words, it won't last long—this baby rebellion. It only takes time which might be better spent in Piccadilly and Rotten Row. Mr. Washington, I hear, is shaking in his shoes. That nonsense that occurred over on—what's the name of that foolish little hill across the river?

BETTY. Brookland Heights, your lordship.

PERCY. Thank you, the same. That showed what the Yankees were made of. They vanished like thin mist at sunrise.

ALICE. They were missed, indeed. (*A young Scotsman comes up to Lord Percy and whispers in his ear.*)

PERCY. 'Pon my soul! (*He turns.*) Ladies, you'll excuse me for a moment. I—— (*He hurries out. Enter Mrs. Pendleton. She is evidently looking for some one.*)

BETTY (*to Fitzhugh*). We'll go over and take some punch and leave these two to talk together. (*To Alice.*) Tom has something very important to communicate. (*She walks up stage.*)

ADAMS. I want you to break your engagement to Jack Ripley. He holds you through fraud.

ALICE. Tom!

ADAMS. When he was drunk the other night he boasted to me of the way he outwitted Nathan.

ALICE. Oh, no! It can't be! Why, I asked Nathan ten days ago if there wasn't a mistake. I told him I had seen him in liquor and he could not explain.

ADAMS. No, because he didn't want to give me away. I was the one, and Nathan locked me in his bedroom and pretended he was drunk to keep father from finding out, because he knew what father would do. Why didn't you tell me about seeing Nathan, and your infernal promise?

ALICE. I've never told a soul—I couldn't.

ADAMS. And father never mentioned it. I suppose he was ashamed for having suspected me. I, like a fool, didn't remember a thing. Of course Ripley kept his mouth shut.

ALICE. Tom, did Jack know that Nathan was pretending?

ADAMS. Know? He suggested Nathan's doing it.

ALICE. Oh, Tom, isn't it horrible? Poor Nathan!

ADAMS. I owe everything to him. Why, the day after that affair, he took me in hand and he never let go till he got me away from the shoals. But in all that time he never told me what he had done. Where is he now? I want to write him.

ALICE. I don't know. He's gone off on some mission. I couldn't find out what. Come this way, for I don't want any one to hear. (*They retire a bit, and converse in whispers.*)

MRS. PENDLETON (*discovering Pandora Pendleton in the window recess*). Pandora—well, at last I've found you. You will excuse her, Mr. Hezekiah Brown, but I wish to converse with her.

BROWN. All right. Remember, Pan. (*He ambles off to back, where he watches with interest.*)

MRS. PENDLETON. Fie upon you for a froward little idiot! I don't know when I've been so vexed. Here was his lordship in the room, and you wasting yourself on that Hezekiah jackanapes.

PANDORA. He's a loyalist, and his father is quite a Merchant Prince.

MRS. PENDLETON. A country clown! Fie upon you, I say! It's too enraging! With titled foreigners about, you sneak into a corner with a country lout. He has red hair and a wretched broken smile. When you have a chance to be a ladyship——

PANDORA. I prefer a Hezekiah-merchant-ship.

MRS. PENDLETON. Silence! Now, mark me well. I shall obtain an introduction to his lordship and you are to make the most of it.

PANDORA. But he won't notice me unless I do something odd, like fainting in his arms.

MRS. PENDLETON. Fudge! There are forty genteel ways to attract a gentleman.

PANDORA. But a lord isn't a gentleman. He's different—he's awesome.

MRS. PENDLETON (*to Alice*). Pardon, Mistress Adams. Could I speak to you a moment?

ALICE. What is it, Mrs. Pendleton?

MRS. PENDLETON. Don't let me interrupt.

ADAMS. We were quite finished, madam. (*He bows and makes his way over to Betty and Fitzhugh. Fitzhugh leaves them, and Betty and Tom take possession of the window-seat.*)

MRS. PENDLETON. My dear daughter Pandora has a keen but maidenly desire to meet Lord Percy. Such a distinguished man and son of the Duke of Northumberland. (*Pandora gazes vacantly out over the audience. Re-enter Lord Percy. As he sees Alice he hastens forward.*)

ALICE. Lord Percy, Mrs. Pendleton is very anxious to meet you.

PERCY. Charmed to meet you, ma'am. (*Before he has a chance to kiss her hand, she turns to Pandora, who is still abstractedly star-gazing.*)

MRS. PENDLETON. Pandora, my love. (*She gives her a surreptitious dig in the ribs.*) Come to life.

PANDORA. Aow, mamma! Whatever is it?

MRS. PENDLETON. This is my daughter Pandora.

PANDORA (*sleepily*). How do you do? Who is this?

MRS. PENDLETON. His lordship, Earl Percy of Northumberland.

PANDORA. Gemini! (*She loses her head.*) How do you like America? Does it seem wild? We think it very pretty here in America in summer. Don't we, mamma?

PERCY. It's charming, I'm sure. I am delighted to have met you both. (*He bows again; Pandora simpers.*)

Could you grant me a few moments of your charming society, Mistress Adams?

ALICE (*smiling*). I could. (*They retire to sofa.*)

MRS. PENDLETON. You little stupid! (*She imitates.*) "It's very pretty in America." Do you call that conversation that would win an earl? Oh, don't speak to me! (*She goes out indignantly.*)

PANDORA. But—mamma. (*Exit.*)

(*As Pandora follows her mother, Hezekiah gives a shrill whistle and she turns.*)

HEZEKIAH. Oh, Pan!

PANDORA. Hezekiah, my lamb. (*She hastily joins him at the back, and after Tom Adams and Betty Singleton go forward to converse with Alice and Lord Percy, Pandora and Hezekiah sit on the stairs and converse. She plays with his hair and they discuss their elopement. He finally takes a ring out of his pocket and tries it on her finger.*)

BETTY (*looking after them from the recess and laughing*). I feel very sorry for your lordship with these scheming mothers.

ALICE. He is very well able to take care of himself, so I've noticed.

BETTY. So you've tried and failed.

ALICE (*laughing*). I'm not saying.

PERCY. I want to inform you all that the most terrible and outrageous thing has just occurred. Really, the impertinence of these Yankees has gone too far!

ALICE. What is it, your lordship?

PERCY. They have calmly walked off with the hero of the play we intended to give to-morrow night.

ALICE. Why don't you play the hero? 'Twould be an amazingly becoming rôle.

PERCY. Then who would take my part? And, Lieutenant Adams, I wish you could have seen him act, and all the rest of the cast. We were going to do "The Conscious Lovers." I saw Lord Howe for a moment to see if he couldn't effect an exchange of prisoners. His

lordship said he understood our position and would do what he could. But it will take a week at least.

BETTY. Why doesn't your lordship ask young Ripley to assist?

PERCY. I don't know him.

ADAMS. He's not here at present. I hear he's gone to Flatbush to hide his chagrin. Did you hear what he did for General Howe the other day?

ALICE. No.

ADAMS. He did a little spy work, and instead of fooling the Yankees they fooled him. He stole some bogus despatches, and as a result we spent a pleasant day avoiding mosquitoes over at Paulus Hook, while the Yankees, unmolested, crossed from Governor's Island. General Howe was furious, and Ripley has become a laughing-stock.

ALICE. Is there no one else? (*Laughing.*) Why doesn't your lordship ask that young Tory? I mean the one you said was so shy and to whom you'd taken such a fancy?

PERCY. Ods-life, Mistress Adams, you've solved it. He's the very one, and when you see him you'll all agree——

ADAMS. Who is he, sir?

PERCY. You'll pardon me for saying it, but he is the finest American I've met. Everything I like in a man is in him. He is so reliable and so clean-limbed.

ADAMS. He sounds like a horse. Where did you run across him, sir? I wonder who he is?

PERCY. I met him at Ranelagh Gardens and I was so struck by his appearance that I sat down at his table and engaged him in conversation. That was the beginning of it.

BETTY. Of what, your lordship?

PERCY. Our friendship. The long and the short of the matter is, I've seen him frequently. He is very intelligent but painfully ignorant about all matters pertaining to warfare. I have taken him about myself to

hear him exclaim, just as I would take a small brother to the King's Play-house. He's here to-night. I insisted on his coming. I'll go and fetch him, and you, Mr. Adams, might assemble the cast in the library and we can talk matters over. (*Exit.*)

ALICE. I wonder who it can be? (*She looks uneasy.*)

Enter Mrs. Pendleton. Hezekiah and Pandora duck behind the stair-rail, but Mrs. Pendleton catches sight of them, and grabbing Pandora by the hand drags her from the room, murmuring as she does so: "Not a word to me, you froward little minx. It's too much. Sh! be quiet, not a word." Pandora replies: "But, mamma, I—really, mamma, you don't understand." At the same time she is careful to conceal the hand on which Hezekiah has slipped the ring.

Hezekiah, in the meanwhile, mutters to himself ferociously about the "old hag" and "interfering old parrot." He confides his troubles to a couple at back and finally persuades them to put in a good word for him with Mrs. Pendleton. They exeunt.

All this is done in pantomime while the action goes on.

ADAMS. Alice, Ripley is coming. (*Ripley appears faultlessly dressed, on the stairs.*)

ALICE. Ripley! Betty, I wish to speak to him alone.

BETTY. Come on, Tommy. (*They go.*)

RIPLEY (*as he comes forward*). Alice, what an unexpected joy. I thought you were still with your rebel friends else I should have returned from Flatbush before to-night.

ALICE. I want to speak to you for a moment.

RIPLEY. I am honoured.

ALICE. And when I am done you can go.

RIPLEY. Go—— (*He laughs derisively.*)

ALICE. For I never intend to speak to you again.

RIPLEY. Merely because you found I was a spy?

ALICE. Because I know from Tom all about that promise and your contemptible part in it.

RIPLEY (*contemptuously*). What do you mean?

ALICE. When you were in liquor the other night you boasted to Tom of the way you had outwitted Nathan Hale. Now the promise is off and I can't wait to see Nathan to beg his pardon for ever having believed you and doubted him.

RIPLEY. You believed your own eyes. I deny this cock-and-bull story of your brother's absolutely. I——

ALICE. Not another word! Go! I shan't soil my lips by telling you what I think of you. As for your being a spy, that most loathsome of all things, among your friends—faith, I'm glad you swallowed the bait Nathan prepared for you. You deserved it.

RIPLEY. So I have him to thank for being made ridiculous in the army's eyes. Mistress Adams, the ways of war are strange, and likewise its fortunes. My fortune in a game of hazard has always been the best, and I shall have a chance to pay Nathan Hale back. And when I do, I shall pay with interest. (*Alice, without heeding him, leaves the room. Enter on the stairway Bildad and others. They wear black masks and carry pistols.*)

BILDAD. Surrender!

RIPLEY. Be careful there. It may be loaded.

BILDAD. Bullets and guns, of course, is loaded.

RIPLEY (*very uncomfortable*). No more of this nonsense.

BILDAD (*taking deliberate aim*). Shall I hit him in the head, boys, or only wing him?

RIPLEY (*cowers*). You little fool!

BILDAD. Solomon, search him. You, too, Timothy. (*Enter Fitzhugh at L. R. and then Mrs. Pendleton.*)

FITZHUGH. Ah, Ripley, the ladies want to know if you'll give 'em a song. Hello! Ods-life, what's this?

BILDAD (*pointing the other pistol*). You're my prisoner, too. Stand still there or I'll shoot. Take aim, boys.

MRS. PENDLETON. Stop! You horrid children. Cap-

tain Ripley, save me! Lieutenant Fitzhugh, save me! (*Enter Pandora and Hezekiah. She is following her mother. Solomon promptly points his pistol at her.*)

PANDORA (*turning to Hezekiah in a terrified way*). Fly, my own! (*They fly.*)

FITZHUGH. What are you lads doing?

BILDAD. We are going to shoot you unless you surrender.

FITZHUGH (*amused*). What have we ever done to you?

BILDAD. You're the enemy. We would have come before and fought you, only, ods-billikins! I got the measles. Will you gentlemen please surrender?

RIPLEY (*easily*). We should be charmed to, and now what are you going to do with us next?

BILDAD (*perplexed*). Oh—oh, march you back to our camp, for, you see, you're our prisoners.

MRS. PENDLETON. Little boy, now you are not going to march me. I can't march, little boy, in these clothes.

BILDAD. Call me Captain, please.

MRS. PENDLETON. Captain!

BILDAD. Fall into line there.

FITZHUGH. Here's a queer go with this little demon. (*They take positions.*)

BILDAD. Damme, but this mask gets in the eyes. (*He dashes it off.*)

MRS. PENDLETON. It's my nephew! Now, Bildad, mind your manners.

BILDAD. You forget, Aunt Caroline, this is war, not dancing-school, and I must do my duty. Fall in!

MRS. PENDLETON. I am not going to budge.

BILDAD. One, two—— (*Aunt Caroline subsides.*)

RIPLEY. You little idiot! Let your aunt alone. You're not fighting women. What would you do with her?

BILDAD. Oh, give her to some one to marry—whoever wanted her. (*Enter Tom Adams from library.*)

ADAMS (*catching Bildad by the arm*). Hello! What have we here?

BILDAD. Gemini! Why didn't you protect my rear, you loons?

FITZHUGH. These are the Yankees come to fight us. (*Bildad struggles.*)

BILDAD. Let go of me! Why don't you chaps help me? (*Adams lifts Bildad up and Fitzhugh quickly takes the pistols.*)

MRS. PENDLETON. I shall write a long epistle to your mother, Bildad, and tell her all. Captain Ripley, will you sing for me and restore my shattered nerves? (*Exit.*)

BILDAD. Would you mind setting me down? That's not the way to treat a prisoner of war.

ADAMS. Pardon me! You have my humblest apologies.

RIPLEY. They deserve a good spanking. (*Exit Ripley.*)

BILDAD. Spank a prisoner of war! Pooh!

ADAMS. That's all he knows, isn't it? You want to be shot, eh?

BILDAD. It's the only thing.

SOLOMON. No, Bildad, we don't.

TIMOTHY. And never go fishing again—never——

THE REST IN A CHORUS. No!

BILDAD. Then spank them but shoot me.

FITZHUGH (*laughing*). You little goose! You better go home and go to bed. It's long past curfew time.

BILDAD. And you're not going to shoot me—or nothing?

ADAMS. No, not to-night. And be sure to change your shoes and stockings when you get home, for they are sopping wet.

BILDAD (*with keen disappointment*). Enemies don't talk like that. That's the way mothers talk. Gadzooks! I can't be anything in this war. Colonel Knowlton won't have me in the army and the enemy won't let me fight 'em. Come on, fellows, let's go home. (*He turns without another word and exit.*)

ADAMS. Do you know your way? (*Adams goes out*

with them, Bildad stalking ahead. Exeunt at L. R. Enter from U. R. Percy and Hale. Hale is in a dark brocade and wears his own wig.)

HALE. It's very kind of you to be so eager to have me play that part, but I'm only indifferently good at acting, and, to tell the truth, I'm not in the mood.

PERCY. When one's spirits flag 'tis just the time to brighten them. I thought you'd be willing to help me out.

HALE (*impetuously*). And so I should, for you don't know how much, how very much, I have appreciated your kindness. There are few would take in a pedagogue like myself, get him clothes that he might cut a better figure at a dance, and do all the things for an utter stranger that you have done.

PERCY. Then pay me back by acting in my play.

HALE. It would be a small return to make.

PERCY. Ods-life! You're under no obligations. What I did, I did out of selfish affection for you. You give a man such a sense of confidence and trust.

HALE. It's a wrong impression. I don't deserve your friendship. I——

PERCY. Rot! Do you know what I shall insist upon your doing when these accursed rebels are put down? You must visit me in England and I'll show you London, man, which you'll find vastly more entertaining than any of the sights I've shown you here.

HALE. Thanks. I am afraid it will be a long time.

PERCY. Nonsense!

HALE. Did not that skirmish on Harlem Heights show you the mettle of the Yankees and their serious determination?

PERCY. Gad! Some of them did fight like fury. Knowlton's Rangers, for example. Hale, you were strange that day as we watched that battle. You say you are a runaway school-teacher—well, I never saw such thirst for battle in any man's eyes as was in yours.

HALE. You misunderstood. Colonel Knowlton was an old friend.

PERCY (*as Tom reappears at the door at back*). Oh, Lieutenant Adams, did you tell them?

ADAMS. Yes, sir, they ought to be here now.

PERCY. Do you know Mr. Hale?

HALE (*easily*). Yes, I knew him in college.

PERCY. Come right in. (*Percy opens the door of the library and enters.*)

ADAMS. Nathan, what are you doing here? (*He seizes him by the arm.*) Ripley is in the house and he may see you.

HALE. Ripley here? I thought he was on Long Island. (*He controls himself.*) He can't hurt one of his Majesty's subjects.

ADAMS. What do you mean?

HALE. I've changed my ideas, that's all, and decided to join those who are true to his Majesty—like hundreds of others—like you.

ADAMS. Ods-life! But you frightened me at first. I am more than glad. (*As they go in, Adams continues:*) Nathan, I know all about your pretending to be drunk, and—oh—I never can thank you enough.

HALE. Don't think of it. (*Percy reappears.*)

PERCY. Aren't you coming in? (*Enter Fitzhugh and Steinbrücke.*)

FITZHUGH. Have I delayed you?

PERCY. Not at all. Lieutenant Fitzhugh and Lieutenant Steinbrücke, allow me to present to you Mr. Hale, who very kindly consented to play the hero in the hour of need.

FITZHUGH. Very much pleased to meet the hero. (*Steinbrücke bows. Alice appears at the top of the stairs, and as she comes down Percy speaks to her.*)

PERCY. Mistress Adams, you expressed a desire to meet my hero. Allow me to present to you—Mr. Hale. (*Alice, as she sees Nathan, catches her breath for a moment, but quickly regains her control.*)

ALICE (*extending her hand*). I am delighted to meet —Mr. Hale.

FITZHUGH. Hale! (*Laughing.*) I heard that name in connection with Knowlton's Rangers.

ALICE. I believe there is one there, but the Hale family is a large one. Half are loyalists and half rebels.

FITZHUGH. Talking of rebels! Did you hear that Knowlton, the Commander of the Rangers, was killed on Harlem Heights? A good man to have out of the way. (*Hale's hand tightens. Percy notices it and puts his arm about him.*)

STEINBRÜCKE. We learned to-day that there are some Yankee spies over here. I'd like to catch one.

FITZHUGH. Poor fools!

PERCY. I am very sorry to interrupt this delightful conversation, but we must rehearse "The Conscious Lovers." You will excuse us, Mistress Adams?

ALICE. Your lordship, I understand. Gentlemen, I bid you adieu. (*She courtesys to them. Hale bows along with the others. As Alice is left alone, she becomes conscious that the door at the other side of the room has swung open. The singing has in the meantime stopped.*)

ALICE (*to herself*). It's open. (*She walks up the stage until she can be in a line with it.*) Captain Ripley! Why, how long have you been there?

RIPLEY (*entering*). Only a moment; why?

ALICE (*uneasily*). Where has every one gone?

RIPLEY. Some to supper and some to bed.

ALICE. Don't let me keep you.

RIPLEY. You're not. I was on my way to the library—to get a book.

ALICE. I didn't know you cared for novels.

RIPLEY. You seem interested in my preferences. Considering your attitude a few moments since, I could hardly hope for such flattering notice.

ALICE. I thought perhaps I—was—unnecessarily severe.

RIPLEY. It is very gracious of you, Mistress Adams. I am going to get an essay on hypocrisy.

ALICE (*lightly*). I am sure you don't need that.

RIPLEY. That sounds more natural.

ALICE. The book you have in mind is not in the library.

RIPLEY. No?

ALICE. I was reading it in my chamber this evening, and I left it on the what-not by the fire. It's the third chamber on the left.

RIPLEY. But you are not staying here?

ALICE. I'm not? Ask Mistress Singleton.

RIPLEY. But why should you read such books?

ALICE. To know how the better to answer you.

RIPLEY. I suspect you.

ALICE. Fie! Of what?

RIPLEY. You want me to go up-stairs and then you will have Nathan Hale lying in wait.

ALICE. That's likely.

RIPLEY. I prefer the library. It's safer. (*He approaches the door of the library.*)

ALICE. Don't—I— (*she stops*) I mean—I think it's quite unkind your disbelieving me.

RIPLEY. I don't.

ALICE. Then prove it by taking a candle and going up-stairs to look for that book.

RIPLEY. Light your candle. (*While she does so he looks stealthily at the door.*)

ALICE (*not knowing whether he knows or not*). Here! (*He takes the candle and walks slowly to the stairs.*)

RIPLEY. Thank you for your solicitude concerning the betterment of my brain. (*He mounts a dozen steps and almost unconsciously she goes toward the library door as tho' to warn Nathan.*)

RIPLEY (*laughing*). Oh, you child! Do you suppose I do not know?

ALICE (*quickly*). Know what?

RIPLEY. Who is in that room.

ALICE. Why, yes. Lord Percy and——

RIPLEY (*coming down the steps*). And Nathan Hale.

(*She does not answer.*) It's no use, I saw him with my own eyes.

ALICE. You were—only playing with me?

RIPLEY. Rather say I accepted your invitation for a game.

ALICE. What if it is Nathan Hale?

RIPLEY (*grimly*). You know what that means as well as I.

ALICE. I should advise you not to do anything to him.

RIPLEY (*laughing*). Why not? What will you do?

ALICE. He is a loyalist.

RIPLEY (*still laughing*). Rot!

ALICE. Believe it or not, as you choose. Have him arrested and see how soon the army will laugh at your expense again.

RIPLEY. Hale's a spy—that loathsomest of all creatures, as you yourself said.

ALICE. If he were a spy, there would be a good reason for it.

RIPLEY. Love changes one's point of view. The difference between the spy you don't love and the spy you do, is that one's a scamp and the other's a hero.

ALICE. When you play the spy, it's from your lack of principle; if Nathan played it, it would be because of his principles. That's the difference.

RIPLEY (*goes to the door*). Send an orderly here.

ALICE. Oh, no! Oh, no!

RIPLEY. You know he's a spy. Your actions show it. I'll be willing to take the risk of having him searched.

ALICE. Jack, you must give him a chance. If you'll only let him go—I'll do anything for you. I'll marry you—I swear it.

RIPLEY. It's too late.

ALICE. You wouldn't be doing wrong in letting him go. He claims he's a Tory. How do you know? I don't know.

RIPLEY. Then why are you so agitated?

ALICE. I'm afraid of you. (*Enter Pandora.*)

PANDORA. Have you seen mamma?

RIPLEY. No. She hasn't been here.

PANDORA. Thank you. (*Exit. Enter Orderly.*)

ORDERLY. Yes, Captain. (*Alice leans over the sofa, overcome with emotion.*)

RIPLEY (*after a pause*). Wait—wait outside. (*Alice looks up quickly and expectantly.*) I have a curious idea. As you say, there's a slim chance of his being a Tory. I think I'll decide this matter by the flip of a coin.

ALICE. Thanks, Captain Ripley. I will do anything you want.

RIPLEY (*grimly*). Wait! The hazard I suggest is very unusual. It is this: If you can keep Hale in this room for twenty minutes making love to you, I shall let him go.

ALICE (*proudly*). I don't understand.

RIPLEY. I repeat. I shall hide behind these curtains with this firearm. The Orderly shall stand outside with his musket. If Hale leaves this room before the twenty minutes are up, he leaves for the next world.

ALICE. You can't mean it. It's absurd.

RIPLEY. And not one word to him of my purpose must you give.

ALICE. What is your reason for this?

RIPLEY. Reason? I want you to pay for all you've made me suffer, for the humiliation you and Hale have heaped upon me. (*He pauses.*) Suppose you tell dear Nathan, as you threatened, about his not being drunk, and beg Nathan's pardon for ever having disbelieved him. I should like to witness that scene. A private play is a pleasure I don't often have; and I shall enjoy seeing an impromptu performance of The "Conscious Lovers."

ALICE. I refuse.

RIPLEY. As you say. (*He moves toward the back.*)

ALICE. But Nathan is engaged. How can I reach him?

RIPLEY. Love will find a way.

ALICE. What guarantee have I that you are telling the truth, and will let him go when the twenty minutes are up?

RIPLEY. You have none—except my word. Feeling as you do, why risk it? I can end it now.

ALICE (*quickly*). No!

RIPLEY. Then call him. Remember you act in front of those curtains, within reach of my— (*he pats his holster*) and it must be a love scene.

ALICE. You wouldn't dare shoot him. For he may be a loyalist.

RIPLEY. I'll take my chances on that. Orderly! (*The Orderly reappears. Ripley places a small sofa in front of curtains at L. L. To Alice:*) You might call Nathan. (*Alice, realising that nothing can be done, goes to the library and opens the door.*)

RIPLEY (*to Orderly*). Send word to Captain Cunningham to come here directly with a small detachment of men. There is a spy in there and we can afford to take no chances of having him slip through our fingers. Tell Captain Cunningham to surround the house and then give three blasts on the bugle. Go! (*The Orderly retires. Ripley glides behind the curtains.*)

(*Pandora, followed by Hezekiah, tiptoes from the library and quietly goes out the front door, "elopement" written in all their actions. Re-enter Alice alone.*)

RIPLEY. Where is he? Are you playing me false?

ALICE. No, but I can't invent an excuse to get him out that won't arouse suspicion on the part of the officers. I have already said that I had never met Nathan Hale before and it would look strange and unmaidenly to demand an interview with him under such a circumstance.

RIPLEY. True! What did you say to explain your entrance?

ALICE. I said I was hunting for a book. (*The door is thrown open. Ripley jumps behind curtains and Percy and others enter, then Hale.*)

PERCY. Egad! It didn't take long. You see, Mistress Adams, your rogue of a brother knew not one line of his part, his head being chuck full of Mistress Betty. So we have postponed the rehearsal till to-morrow. (*Alice pulls Percy to one side.*)

ALICE. I wish you'd allow me to converse with your paragon. I have a monstrous curiosity to see what he is like.

PERCY. Mistress Adams, I think you show uncommon taste; (*seriously*) he is one in thousands. Hale, I am going to reward you for obliging me and becoming my hero, with a chance to talk with Mistress Adams, who seems willing to make your further acquaintance. (*He bows to Alice and withdraws, the others following. Tom lingers for a moment and then catching Alice's eye he goes. Alice seems unable to collect herself.*)

ALICE. Oh—I—I—want to talk to you a moment. (*She glances involuntarily toward the curtains.*)

NATHAN (*with the deepest regret in his tones*). I am very sorry, Mistress Adams, but I must go.

ALICE (*going on rapidly*). Nathan, I want to tell you that I know at last all about that affair in New Haven, and, Nathan (*her eyes full of tears*), I can't thank you enough ever.

NATHAN (*to himself*). Poor Tom! (*He pauses, and an expression of relief passes over his face.*) Selfishly, I'm glad that you know, because—— (*He suddenly realises that she is still engaged to Ripley, and stops.*)

ALICE. Why didn't you tell me the truth when I asked you?

HALE (*slowly*). It didn't seem fair to Tom, and, furthermore, it was my fault as much as his. I should have looked out for him more. He was not to blame. He was young and didn't know, and he is doing so well now that I couldn't bear to rake up the past. (*His voice growing softer.*) Besides, I knew how much he was to you.

ALICE (*so moved she can hardly speak*). You did that for Tom and me, and all you got in return was blame and insults. I never shall forgive myself.

HALE. But how could you think otherwise? You saw me.

ALICE (*sudden apprehension in regard to Ripley making*

her nervous and abstracted). But I ought to have known, I ought to have felt—I——

HALE (*comfortingly*). What is it? (*He is on the point of saying "dear," but controls himself.*)

ALICE. Nothing—I——

HALE. Are you cold?

ALICE (*trying to regain her composure*). Some one was walking over my grave. (*At the word grave, her tone unconsciously grows serious, and she cannot keep her solicitude out of her eyes.*)

HALE. Alice, what made you come into the room that day? Was it an accident?

ALICE (*her voice so constrained she can hardly speak*). Captain Ripley said he had something to show me. I had told him that if he could prove you a hypocrite I would marry him—and——

HALE (*dumfounded*). And that was why—you—— (*She nods her head, unable to speak.*) The cur, the blackguard, the cheat!

ALICE. Oh, no, what am I saying? He wasn't there at all—I mean, I was looking for my kerchief.

HALE. Alice, I must go, for Ripley is here, Tom tells me, and I——

ALICE. Oh, no, don't go yet.

HALE (*quietly*). But I have no right to run unnecessary risk. Good-bye. I shall see you soon again. (*His voice sounds almost like a boy's, only there is a tired ring to it.*) I am more glad than you know to have your good opinion back; good-night.

ALICE. But I haven't seen you—in so long—and I have so much to say.

NATHAN. I am sorry, but I can't.

ALICE. You must stay for a short while, please—I——

NATHAN. I'm sorry, but——

ALICE. Can't you see, after losing you for four years that I can't let you go like this—I—— (*She stops.*)

NATHAN (*turning and looking deep into her eyes*).

You mean you— (*She can't answer, but gives an almost convulsive sob. He stands there transfixed, then catches her in his arms and kisses her long and reverently.*) At last—after all these years. And now, dear, good-bye.

ALICE. Oh, don't go yet. Please, don't go.

HALE. You are another reason why I must go. (*He moves toward the door.*)

ALICE. You are so foolish to have these old-womanish fears. Now, please do as I say. Sit here beside me for fifteen minutes. The next fifteen will not be more dangerous than the fifteen that are past.

HALE. Alice, I don't wish to alarm you, but it is a very serious thing for me to stay here. You know what I am, but do you know what my capture would mean?

ALICE (*with sudden dread*). Yes, I do. Why did you come here at all to-night?

HALE. Percy asked me to. (*He turns toward the door again, then pauses.*) I never expected to have so much happiness.

ALICE. Nathan, wait a little. I don't want you to go, I——

HALE. I can't understand you, Alice.

ALICE. It is only because I love you so. (*A bugle sounds and instantly Ripley jumps out from behind the curtain, covering Hale with his pistol.*)

RIPLEY. Thank you, Alice. You've kept him long enough and the house is surrounded. Captain Hale, we meet again. This time it's you that are the loathsome spy.

ALICE. It's a trick.

RIPLEY. Precisely. As Alice says, this is a trick. We thought it would take twenty minutes, but we didn't have to wait that long. (*Sounds of steps are heard and Cunningham and soldiers enter.*)

ALICE. You promised!

RIPLEY. That I wouldn't tell him your part in it? Pray, forgive me.

ALICE. It isn't so. (*Hale has darted toward the window.*)

RIPLEY. No use. The house is surrounded. Cunningham, arrest that man.

ALICE. He spared you, the other day.

RIPLEY. For your sake, not mine. (*Cunningham and men in the meantime have seized Hale. As they do so, enter Lord Percy.*)

PERCY. Why, Hale! (*He turns.*) Who is responsible for this indignity?

RIPLEY. I am, sir; I charge him with being Nathan Hale, a Yankee spy.

PERCY. And who are you?

RIPLEY. Captain John Ripley. I accuse this man of being a spy.

PERCY. You are misinformed. This gentleman is a friend of mine. (*The soldiers release Hale.*)

RIPLEY. He's a spy, and I demand, sir, that he be searched.

PERCY. After your false despatches and the humiliation of our army, we have heard enough of your cock-and-bull stories.

RIPLEY. He is the one who wrote that false despatch. I tell you I know who he is. He admitted he was a spy a moment since to my confederate.

PERCY. I don't believe you. I know this gentleman, and I'll be sponsor for his being a loyal subject of his Majesty.

ADAMS. And I'll vouch for him, too, sir.

ALICE (*unable to control her grief*). Oh, Nathan!

RIPLEY. I demand, sir, that he be searched.

PERCY. Be silent. As your superior officer I forbid you to further insult my guest.

HALE. I am willing to be searched.

PERCY. Never. I won't allow it. Mr. Hale, accept my humblest apologies for this indignity. Captain Ripley, good-night. (*Curtain.*)

(*Second curtain: Ripley has gone.*)

ACT IV

The scene is laid in a small bed-chamber in the Dove Tavern, New York. Time: 12.30 *P. M.*

The chamber contains a few chairs, a desk, and a small window at L. R.

As curtain rises, the door opens at L. L. and Hale enters with a candle, closes the door softly, takes off his brocade coat and waistcoat and hangs them on a hook. Then he takes his own simple cloth coat and begins to put it on, when he stops. He goes to the table and takes a quill and ink; then he extracts some papers from behind a picture-frame and rapidly adds a few notes.

A knock is heard on the door. Hale hastily hides the notes, unfastens the door, and Alice enters.

ALICE. Nathan, did you believe that I——

HALE. No, of course not. I knew it must be one of Ripley's damnable tricks, though I didn't understand.

ALICE. But everything was so black against me.

HALE. Appearances never indicate anything unless one knows what's beneath them. (*He pauses for a moment.*) Furthermore, I know you. (*His voice is low and deep from feeling.*)

ALICE (*gratefully*). Thank you. He told me if I could keep you twenty minutes in the snares of love, you could go free; otherwise——

HALE. I see. And you did it all for me. (*He puts his arm about her.*)

ALICE. I couldn't say anything. Each subject I introduced seemed to call forth a confession of your being a spy. Oh, Nathan, why did you do it?

HALE. It was an absolute necessity. I came to find out when and where the British planned to take New York.

ALICE. But they took New York long ago.

HALE. I know. But my usefulness was not over. If General Washington needed information then, he needs it more than ever now. I have been making drawings and descriptions of the whole line of fortifications.

ALICE. Don't you realise that every moment is dangerous, with Ripley on your track?

HALE. I am going through the lines to-night. My work is done.

ALICE. But you may be caught.

HALE. Small chance. It's dark and our camp is little over a mile away. What a blessed relief it will be to breathe fresh air again and not the poisonous vapours that surround a spy; to look my friends in the face and live the truth.

ALICE. You were not made for such work.

HALE. But I have succeeded. It's all finished, and I feel like a boy out of school.

ALICE. I don't see how you endured it.

HALE (*quietly*). Percy's friendship was the hardest thing of all. He loved me and I had to take advantage of his love.

ALICE. I must go. Emily is waiting for me in the hall. I have such a sinking feeling in my heart.

HALE. Don't worry, dear, I shall see you soon again. Good-bye. (*He kisses her long and reverently.*)

ALICE. Give me the papers, and then if you are caught——

HALE. No, I couldn't do that. 'Twould not be fair to you. Besides, in one short hour I'll be free.

ALICE. Nathan, I'm so proud of you. Good-night. (*She kisses him, and he takes her in his arms once more.*)

Be careful, for my sake. (*She goes. Left alone, Nathan hastily kicks off his right shoe. He pulls down his stocking until it is almost off, then he takes the papers from his pocket, and folding them very small, tucks them in the sole of his stocking. In great haste he pulls the stocking on again and buckles his breeches over it as before. A light knock is heard at the door.*)

HALE (*smiling to himself*). Alice! (*He goes to the door and opens it. Enter Lord Percy in a long cloak.*)

HALE (*as he sticks his foot into his shoe*). Ah, welcome, Percy!

PERCY (*after a pause*). I have never felt more disappointed in my life in any one than I am in you.

HALE. What do you mean, Percy?

PERCY. I suppose I am a fool to come to you—a man who would so make use of friendship.

HALE. Lord Percy, explain.

PERCY. I know what you are here for.

HALE. You think I'm other than I said?

PERCY. You are a spy. You have used me from the first to gain your end. Chance put me in your hands and you have made the most of it, knowing that what you obtained from me would be reliable.

HALE (*with a choked voice*). What makes you think I am a spy?

PERCY. The realisation struck me like a thunderbolt when Ripley made his accusation. I saw it all. You were Hale of Knowlton's Rangers, and I remembered the look in your eyes as you watched them fight at Harlem Heights. Mistress Adams' attitude proved it. She called you "Nathan" in unconscious agony—she who had never met you before in her life. And I remembered your guileless questions on military matters—and I saw the truth in your eyes as you stood there.

HALE. You are right. I am a spy.

PERCY (*brokenly*). What a weak, gullible fool I've been. (*His voice rises.*) I thought I had your love, instead of which——

HALE. And you did. I love you as I have seldom loved a man.

PERCY. You must have loved me!

HALE. I don't understand your letting me go.

PERCY. I couldn't bear to have you—hung.

HALE (*slowly*). You did that for me? Luckily for you, you thought better of it. Fortunately, you were not too late. I give myself up.

PERCY. I did not come for that. You still can go. I came to ask you if in return you would not use the information that you obtained from me. Use any but that. It's a curious thing to ask a spy, but, in spite of all, I can't help feeling you're my friend, and——

HALE. But your duty to your King! You shan't do it. You shan't make that sacrifice.

PERCY. It has been made.

HALE (*puts his arms about him*). I can't accept it.

PERCY. If I hadn't come here now, you would have gone?

HALE. Yes, I would be well on my way to the American lines.

PERCY. Why should my coming make any difference?

HALE. If I went now, it would be at the expense of your honour. I know what an Englishman you are. I know your loyalty and what your treachery would mean to you. I was willing to play the spy for the sake of my country—I was willing to steal information and even take advantage of a friend, as long as he did not know my real character. When Tom Adams saw me to-night, bless him, he would have been willing to shield me and aid me in escape, which I would not have allowed him to do, but, fortunately, I persuaded him that I was a Tory and he believed. But now that I know my success as a spy depends on your betrayal of your country, I can't do it.

PERCY. It's not betrayal of my country. You aggravate the importance of this little rebellion out of all measure.

HALE. No, no, that won't do. The regret of it would always be with you. Your duty lies in arresting me. It's the way of war. As for me, I have tried and failed.

PERCY. Arrest means death.

HALE. I know; but I would be hanging now if it wasn't for you.

PERCY. What about your honour—your duty to your country? Has a spy a right to be squeamish—to have scruples?

HALE. A spy's duty is to find out all he can, but there are some things even a spy can't do.

PERCY (*pointing out the window*). There lie the American lines—those lights mark your friends. Go, and go quickly, as a favour to me. I would rather make that sacrifice than to have you hung.

HALE. No, I can't accept.

PERCY. Think of your home—life—and Mistress Adams. Don't you care for them?

HALE. Aye—and my country, too—my country that I have served so ill. (*Noise is heard below.*)

PERCY. Quick, man. I hear steps in the street. You've not a moment to lose. The information that you hold would help your people. Take it and go.

HALE. No, I can't. God bless you, Percy. I appreciate what you would do for me. I know what it means. (*The noise of approaching feet is heard.*)

PERCY. They're on the stairs. (*He opens the window.*) This way.

HALE. No—I—you tempt me, God knows, but I can't, Percy— No. (*The door is flung open and Ripley enters with soldiers.*)

RIPLEY (*after looking at them both*). I arrest you, Nathan Hale, on the warrant of Lord Howe.

HALE. You are too late. Lord Percy has already apprehended me.

THE END

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